

伝説の勇者の伝説 4

大掃除の宴

鏡 貴也



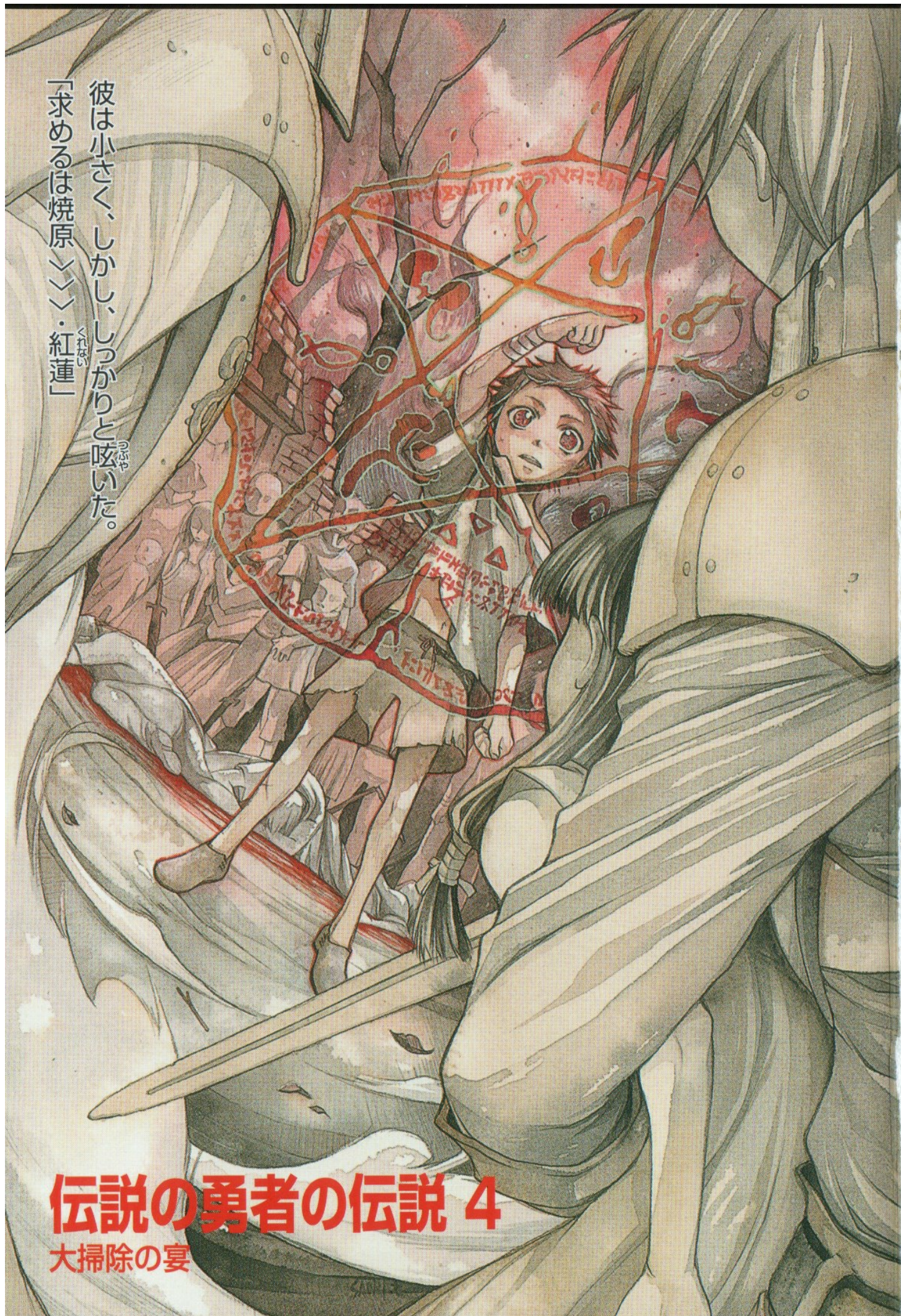
富士見ファンタジア文庫

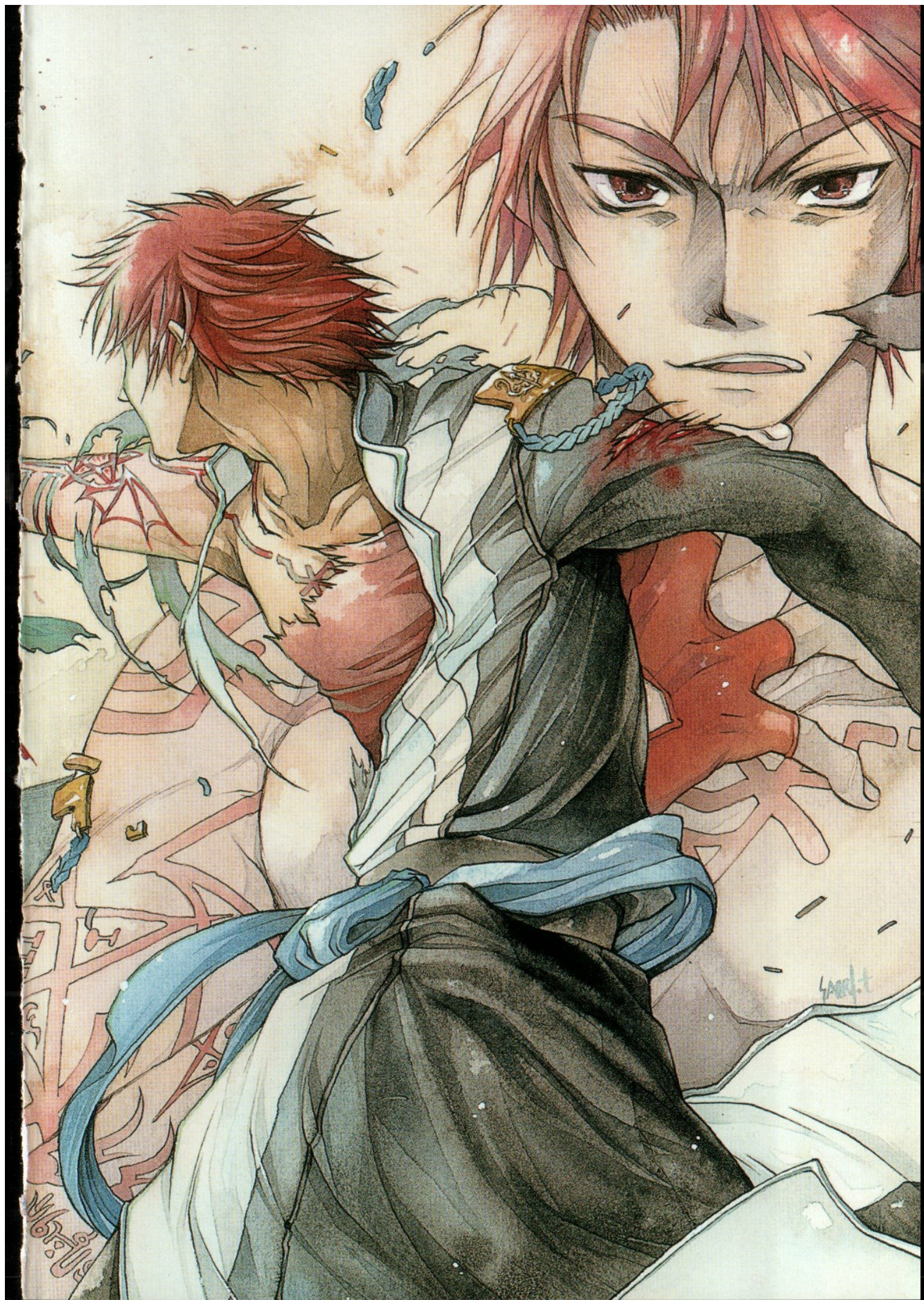
イラスト とよた瑠織

彼は小さく、しかし、しっかりと^{つばや}呟いた。
「求めるは焼原^{くれはい}へへ・紅蓮」

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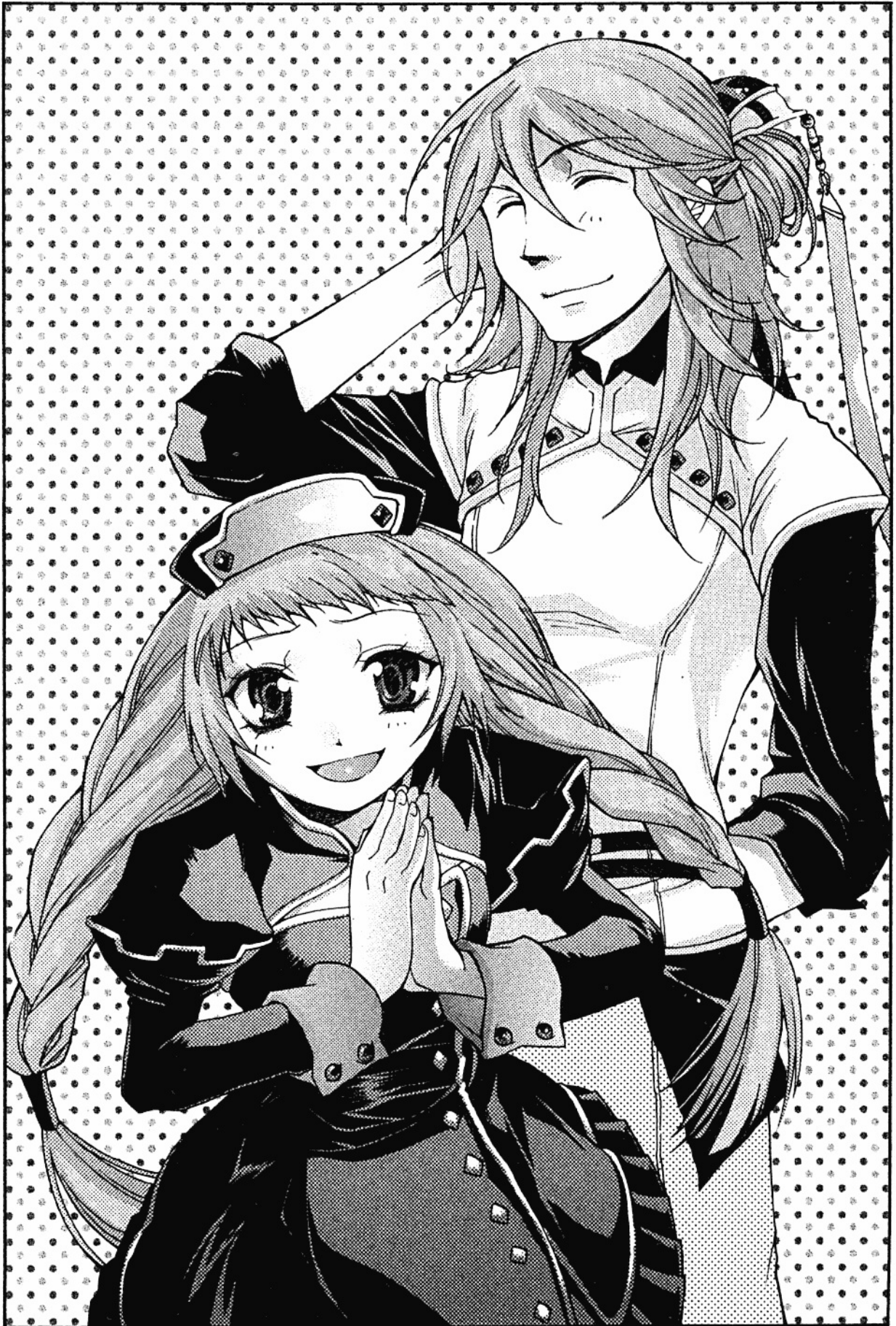




「なんで、ノアが泣いてんのか、聞いてんだよ!!」
怒声とともに、クラウは駆け出した!

獣たちが、一斉にシオンへと襲いかかる！





Prologue I: The pain is engraved

There was nothing.

Everything about his memories, his parents.

The only thing he could remember was his own name.

Other than that, he knew nothing else.

Nothing

Opening his eyes, looking at his surroundings, he discovered that he was in the wilderness.

“Wuuu...”

The sky was stained blood red.

Although that was only due to the sun setting, night was coming...

But he didn't think so.

There was only a depleted and desolate land left surrounding him, and it was covered with...

Corpses.

Corpses.

Corpses.

Death was abundant around him.

Flowing red blood, and the crimson sky that seemed to be reflecting the colour of this blood.

This was the first scene he saw.

This was the first scene he was aware of.

War.

In the distance, although night was falling, he could still hear sounds of the war still proceeding.

The ebbing and pulsing of the light from magic.

He looked at this dazedly...

“Ah, wu...ah...”

He let out a small sound.

At this moment,

“Hey, there’s someone still living here... and it’s a brat!?”

A voice spoke from behind him.

He turned around, several men were busily working deftly.

They stole the swords and the armor from the corpses.

They cut off the fingers and took of the rings of the corpses.

These men,

“Brat! What are you doing on this battlefield? Are you robbers like us?”

Towards this, he...

“Wuuu... ah”

He was unable to speak properly.

No, could he, was he able to talk?

He didn’t even know this.

He just woke up.

He didn’t have any memories.

No, he didn’t even know what he was.

Then he turned his eyes towards those men whose attire was dirty and looked at them...

Only then, he caught sight of himself and found out.

He was still a small child.

Four, five years old perhaps?

On his body were blood smears.

It wasn't his blood.

It was the blood flowing out from the bodies, it was crimson.

Looking at his hands, he found that they were stained red too.

At this moment,

“But it seems that you're different from us. We have been among these dead bodies for a long time, so we won't be so dirty like you. That means... you're something like a child of the Roland officers? The silly nobles brought their child to the battle grounds and then they died?”

Child... of the nobles?

“Or is it a pleasure child from the Estabul village? Really, the things that the nobles do are disgusting. Even if the other party is a child, they would do anything they like. But from that shabby outfit, you wouldn't be a child of the nobles... that's lucky. The nobles that caught you seem to be dead, eh?”

Saying this, the man spit on the bodies on the ground.

“Then what's your name?”

Asking him that...

This, he could probably reply.

Name...

His name.

Only this, could he still remember.

“.....Ryner”

He said softly. The man said irritatedly,

“Huuh!? I can’t hear. Speak louder.”

“.....Ryner Lute.”

The man heard, nodded, then raised his hand...

Suddenly, he swung his hand towards Ryner’s cheek.

At that moment, the world went black.

The man’s fist struck Ryner’s face and his slender and weak body was sent flying.

He hit the corpses littering the ground...

The man said,

“This is our relationship. Understand? Ryner Lute. I will bring you to my village... but you are our slave. In this warring period, no village is so prosperous that they can raise a brat like you for free. If you want to live, then work hard. If you don’t want to work, then die. Alright, if you understand, then remove the armor and other trinkets from these corpses. Don’t lounge around. Or I’ll kill you!!”

Then he hit him again, Ryner’s world started to move.

This was the ‘world’ that he first saw.

The village he was brought to was a poor village.

It belonged to the Roland Empire...

But it was also a small village near to the fringes of the boundary Roland shared with the Estabul Kingdom...

It was a village that depended on farming...

But the war had destroyed the crops... they could only survive by selling the

items that the men brought from the battle grounds.

Ryner and the other men searched for items of value, taking away the armor and ornaments on the bodies and exchanging these with money, only by doing this were they allowed into the village.

Even if they worked hard, in the end, there was only a simple dinner. In the homes, there was no one, it was only a filthy house...

It was like that every day.

But this life wasn't as bad as he had imagined.

Everyone in this village was very poor.

Not long after, he started to form relations with the people of the village...

The people he knew and his friends increased...

Ryner learnt how to laugh.

Naturally, the abandoned house that Ryner lived in, became a secret place of gathering that the children used without being discovered by the adults...

Those days, could even be called the days of happiness.

So Ryner laughed.

Every day, he would rummage among the bodies, if he failed—no, even if he didn't fail—the adults would still hit him.

But even so, he still felt happy.

So Ryner laughed.

Because...

He, as a person, had been accepted by the village...

But.

On this day, the setting sun seemed to be abnormally red.

Ryner returned from the battlefield, going home and saw the children

gathering together like usual and playing together.

Ryner walked into the room,

“Ah, welcome back, Ryner! Was today a hard day of work?”

Everyone asked him, but Ryner happily smiled,

“It’s al...”

But his words were cut off,

“Ne ne ne, why is Ryner living alone? Why do you have to work with the adults? Where are your dad, your mom? Unless they died in the war, like my dad?”

A girl called Quill who had been frequenting here, asked with an expression of confusion.

Hearing this, Ryner shook his head,

“...I don’t know. I can’t remember. When I was aware of myself, I already had no parents.”

There were many children who lost their mother or father, or even both their parents because of this war...

But Ryner didn’t even have any memories of his parents.

Because he had just awoken.

And it was in that battle ground...

That bloody battle ground...

Then,

“Ai~”

The girl bowed her head, not understanding,

“Are you lonely, by yourself?”

Hearing this, Ryner smiled again and shook his head.

“No, because there’s everyone.”

The girl laughed.

“Then, then, let me be your Okaa-san! From today onwards, call me Okaa-san!”

As she said that, the boy by her side said,

“Ah, then then, let me be Otou-san! Ryner, call me Otou-san! Then then, I’ll be Quill’s husband, we must marry!”

Hearing this, Quill puffed up her cheeks,

“Ai~ I don’t want to marry Deel~”

“Ahwu... I’ve, I’ve been dumped~...”

Saying this, Deel laughed as he pretended to cry.

Seeing this, Ryner laughed again.



Deel was the first friend that he had made in this village.

He liked to make everyone happy, so he was well-liked by everyone.

Ryner also liked him very much.

Because he was in Ryner's home, so the others would gather here.

So that was why Ryner had so many friends...

Ryner laughed again.

He felt that every day was a happy one.

Everyone was so lonely that they couldn't even feel full after eating...

But even so, he felt that being able to laugh with everyone, that was bliss.

He felt that it was really good that he was taken in by this village.

But...

There was an explosion in the distance.

Once, twice, thrice...

They were already accustomed to these sounds, it was the explosions from the offensive magic.

Although the sounds were distant, they slowly drew near, towards this area...

Suddenly, the village became tense...

The door was slammed open, and,

"Quill!? Why are you still here! Come quickly! The army... army again... some people were... this village is going to be involved in this war again!"

Quill's mother rushed in and dragged her out.

At the same moment, the children ran out...

Ryner walked out of the house too.

By this time, the explosions from the magic had drawn nearer.

There was the flash of lightning, the dancing flames.

And fear, every time this happened, there were always people dying.

And there was a war happening in the villages nearby...

The destructive magic would quickly descend upon this village.

Before that happened, they had to escape from here...

Everyone ran towards the opposite direction from the battle.

Ryner followed too...

This time, maybe he would be able to escape without harm.

Even if the village was destroyed, as long as they lived...

But...

Just as Ryner and the others felt that the space before them was contorting, there was an explosion...

“Wha...”

From the dancing dust particles, several armored men emerged.

Then...

“Stay. If you don’t remain still, we’ll kill you.”

They said.

Of course, they couldn’t not stand still.

The opponents could use magic, they were trained soldiers.

They wouldn’t win.

“Wu...”

Ryner and the others couldn’t help but moan, the situation was quite dangerous.

These men said they were going to kill Ryner and the others, who were citizens of Roland, which meant that they were the enemy Estabul soldiers.

Then, they would become sacrifices...

Or in other words, they would be slaughtered because the other party wanted to kill...

No matter what was the ending, if they were really caught like this, it would not be good...

In this period of time that Ryner took to think, the dust cloud dissipated, they could clearly see the men in front of them...

At that moment, Ryner couldn't help but doubt what he was seeing.

The insignia on the armor of the men in front of them... guns and that insignia that portrayed a snake coiling around a gun.

This was...

It was Roland Empire's...

The men of the village relaxed momentarily...

"What, so you are the soldiers of Roland. Really, don't scare us. We thought it was Estabul's... Ah..."

But the man's words were cut off...

One of the Roland soldiers suddenly stabbed the man in the chest with his sword...

The man had an uncomprehending expression,

"...Ai...wh,why..."

Saying this, blood gushed from his mouth and he collapsed.

They couldn't understand.

This army should be the Roland soldiers, but they were killing the men of the village, who were the people of Roland.

In that moment, there was no sound.

No, because it was too sudden, no one was able to make a sound.

Then...

The women who finally understood what was happening,

"Ah..."

They cried, but the sword sank into the chests of these women...

The cries suddenly stopped.

The remaining women covered their mouths, the parents clasped their hands over their children's mouths... frantically trying to stop them from screaming.

If they made a noise, they would be killed.

That was what the Roland soldiers were demonstrating to them through their actions.

Confirming that they understood what they wanted, the Roland soldiers slowly, as if they wanted to look at all of the features of the villagers, slowly moved their eyes...

Using a calm voice,

"...What we are about to do now, you will not see it. What we are about to do now, you will not talk of it to anyone. What we are about to do now, you will accept everything. Even if you cry, or resist, this will not be allowed. If you dare to resist..."

At this moment, the sword flashed again, someone died.

"Just like that."

Someone...died.

Someone died, meaninglessly, completely meaninglessly died.

Companions, friends, people they knew were killed... Everyone desperately held in the cries that they wanted to release.

An abnormal scene.

Bodies, were faintly trembling...

Then, the armored Roland soldiers turned around. At this moment, they noticed it.

There was a luxuriously decorated carriage that was bejeweled that they had never seen before. The soldiers walked towards the carriage, "The preparations are complete."

"Yes."

The door of the carriage opened.

An abnormally slim, around fifty years old man appeared.

He wore a loose outfit that they had never seen before, it was made of the softest material.

They understood just by looking at this man.

This man was a noble.

Noble...

The noble nodded his head with a 'yes', seeming to be quite happy.

"Interesting. How interesting."

He said.

He came down from the carriage and walked towards the villagers, as if inspecting them, looking at Ryner and the others.

No, what the man was seeing were the girls.

And he was choosing the children who were young... and around Ryner's age...

A girl was chosen. Ryner had not talked to her... but he had seen her.

This girl was sent to the carriage by the soldiers. What would happen to the girl, everyone knew it well...

The adults' expression contorted as if they were about to cry, but even so, they said nothing.

If they said anything... they would be killed.

Their bodies were trembling.

Ryner could only feel his body trembling.

Because of anger?

Because of fear?

Because of reluctance?

His body was faintly trembling.

But the noble didn't seem to think of going back on his intentions.

He selected another girl...

This moment, he nearly let out a sound.

This girl was Quill...

It was the girl who was talking to Ryner earlier.

It was the girl who smiled innocently and told him that if he was lonely, she would be his mother.

The noble hit Quill's head with a 'pa', and the Roland soldiers prepared to take her away...

At this moment, her mother,

"Pl-Please, let go of my daught..."

But she only spoke that far.

The mother's chest was stabbed with a sword...

"NOOooooooooooooo!?"

Quill cried.

Ryner could only tremble at this moment.

Why did this...

Mad.

He thought.

Everyone, everything was mad.

He thought.

He was unable to stop trembling.

And the trembling could not be stopped.

Quill was taken away...

Couldn't do anything.

He himself couldn't do...

Suddenly, there was a shout from the crowd.

“I, I won’t let you take Quill away!”

This voice was Deel’s.

Deel shouted...

When Ryner’s eyes turned in that direction, he had already run out.

Towards Quill...

He was very fast, he dodged the sword of a soldier and headed towards the soldier who was carrying Quill...

“Return Quill...”

But his voice stopped.

The soldier carrying Quill had drawn a magical structure and there were flames...

The flames sprung towards Deel.

In that moment.

Ryner was unable to believe what was happening in front of him.

Disappeared.

Literally disappeared.

Deel he...

Was drawn into the overwhelmingly strong flames and became ashes in a moment...

What was left, was the front portion of the hand that Deel had been reaching out...

In the moment he saw this,

“Ah...”

Ryner couldn’t help but let out a sound.

A tremor that slowly, slowly build up...

He didn't know why but his eyes, his eyes ached

His eyes ached tremendously.

The surrounding scene was stained with red.

The evening sky...

Was more crimson than usual...

That red, made him think of a scene.

It was that scene that he had seen when he first awoke.

That scene where the land was covered with corpses and everything was covered with blood.

An empty feeling in his body.

Although he wanted to protect everything, everything seemed to be helpless...

People died.

People died.

At that moment, he unconsciously raised his hand.

This hand started to draw a magical formation.

It was a glowing formation.

This was the magical formation that the Roland soldier had drawn earlier.

This magical formation was drawn by Ryner.

He had no memory of drawing this magical formation.

But he could draw it.

He only looked at it.

He only looked at what the soldier had drawn...

But even so, he could still draw it.

All of the magical structure.

Structure.

Activation sequence.

Design.

He just needed to see.

It was only like that, but all of this seemed to be mastered by him already.

No, it was as if he could understand all of the world, a feeling that he was able to do anything.

He softly and determinedly chanted.

“WHAT I SEEK IS BURNING FIELDS>>>KURENAI”

In that moment.

Flames emerged from the magical formation and burned the soldier who had grabbed Quill.

“What!? There, there is someone who can use magic! Kill him! Kill him quickly!?”

Because of this sudden attack, the soldiers panicked, they shouted...

Then, a soldier pulled out his sword and two soldiers started to chant a magical incantation at the same time.

But Ryner looked at this.

His left and right hand started to draw different magical formations...

And it neutralized the magic of the Roland soldiers forcefully...

Towards this...

“Im,impossible!? That brat, what is he... he caused our magic to...”

He had not finished speaking when his surprised expression turned into one of fear.

Looking at Ryner.

“...That, what is that... eyes... it’s the eyes... ev-everyone, look, look at his eyes... that red five-pointed star... that boy is a wielder of **Alpha Stigma!**”

A wielder of **Alpha Stigma**...

This phrase had never been heard before.

But from that man's expression, it was obvious.

This thing, was unfortunately, something that was to be feared.

Even so...

Ryner took a step forward.

The soldiers backed away in fear immediately.

"Oh, oh no... Lord Alrome. We, we should retreat first... **Alpha Stigma** was truly too dangerous..."

Towards this, the nobleman with his ugly and contorted face nodded and escaped, thinking to escape to the carriage... At this moment, Ryner shouted.

"Release those girls in there! If you don't do it, I'll kill you!"

The nobleman immediately let go of the girls in the carriage frantically, then he escaped in his carriage.

The soldiers left with the carriage too.

Although this was unbelievable, Ryner had chased away the Roland soldiers.

Although he himself was not clear, why he had this sort of power...

But he had stopped it... stopped Quill from being taken away by them.

Even though Deel died...

But, perhaps from this day onwards, he would be able to protect the villagers.

He had thought so.

Perhaps he would be able to help the village that had picked him up...

Ryner checked that that carriage had disappeared from his side, he breathed a sigh of relief, as if his nerves had been about to snap because of the tension...

He recovered his smile and looked around him.

The people of the village.

He looked at the faces of the villagers he had just protected.

But.

He didn't know why but the villagers' expressions...

Were like the expression of the nobleman...

It was an expression of abnormal fear, a contorted expression and they were looking at Ryner...

It was an expression of revulsion as if they were looking something dirty.

Ryner looked...

"...What, what is it, everyone... why do you have that kind of expression..."

But he had not finished speaking when a man of the village spoke with a trembling voice,

"Those eyes... Talrome that guy, why did he pick up something like that!"

He shouted, Ryner couldn't understand,

"Ai, that..."

But he was interrupted.

"Ryner, you have always been keeping this from us, right? Always lying to us?"

"That, everyone, what are you saying..."

He completely didn't understand.

What everyone was talking about.

The event had happened suddenly.

It was a sudden change.

But, but, everyone, everyone, was using an expression of hatred to stare at Ryner,

"It's, it's all your fault! Because there is an unlucky cursed brat like you, everyone is unhappy!"

"Ah... wait, everyone... I..."

But he didn't finish speaking.

Everyone turned to Ryner and said together,

“Monster!”

They shouted.

“Die, you monster!”

“You even dare to stay in our village, unshamed, monster!”

“A cursed monster who only knows how to massacre!!”

Monster...

Yes, everyone called him that.

A monster who killed people...

Mon...ster...

He didn't understand.

He had thought that he had saved everyone...

He had thought that they would be able to return to those happy days of the past.

Although they were poor, although they faced hardships, but everyone was able to laugh and survive every day...

But...

At this moment, his eyes met with a girl.

It was Quill.

But even Quill stared at Ryner...

As if using looking at a disgusting bug, that expression of revulsion.

“Why do you...look at me in that way...”

Still, still, the sky was stained with red.

A crimson red.

A cursed red that made one feel dizzy...

At that moment, Ryner's black eyes...

Showed a crimson five-pointed star...

These eyes were called **Alpha Stigma**, they seemed to be hated and cursed by the people...

This thing seemed to cause everyone's expression to contort in this way, caused them to curse and hate him.

He was called a monster.

But he himself was unable to deny it.

Because he had no memories.

He had no memories of the time before he had awoken in that battle field.

No parents.

No memories.

He didn't even remember who he was.

Then...

Even if he were called a monster, he would be unable to deny it.

His eyes wavered.

Everything was stained with red.

Everything in the world had distanced themselves from him.

There was only a sense of detachment.

If anyone wanted to be close to him, only by being close to him they would understand, he was not wished for by anyone.

He used the eyes where the red curse appeared in, to look at the expression of fear and revulsion that appeared on their faces.

Ryner thought.

I see.

I am...

A monster...

That was, when Ryner became a monster...

The first day.



Chapter 1: The same exhausted man

Blood red sky.

A sky where the sun was setting in was stained with red as if stained by blood.

Looking at this sky, a lazy voice spoke,

“Ah~... Don’t you feel that? The sky has turned red, it seems a little like night has arrived, don’t you feel like sleeping?”

“Mm-hmm. From your words, it seems that even if the sky is still high in the sky, you won’t feel like sleeping?”

“Ai? Yeah, that, if it’s day time, it will give a person the feeling to have an afternoon nap, so I will feel bored.”

“Then when will you not feel like sleeping?”

“Eh~... This~”

Ryner hearing this, couldn’t help but hug his elbows.

“Wu~ the time when I don’t feel like sleeping, is there really such a thing?”

He started to seriously think about this boring question.

Their present location, was that they had entered Runa Empire from the Imperial Nelpha with much difficulty, walking down the path for a certain period of time...

Ryner and Ferris walked.

It was clearly already evening, but he still had bed hair, it could be said that the atmosphere was as if saying “don’t you feel tired?”, and those black eyes that were filled with the urge to sleep. This body that was as lean as a cat’s seemed to ruin the word motivation.

And a different atmosphere that was separate from that lazy atmosphere, the

white armor and cape that made up the special armor that only the Mage Knights of Roland Empire were allowed to wear...

This appearance of Ryner's, towards the earlier question, carried a tired expression that said "wu wu wu" entered deep thought.

"Ah—thinking about it like that, it is really like that. When I wake up early I have not woken up completely, so I will feel tired; in the day time because I want to have an afternoon nap, so I will feel tired; in the afternoon because I have had my lunch, so I will feel tired; in the evening, because it is going to be night time so I will naturally feel tired right? Then at night, since the ancient times have commanded it I will want to sleep..."

Towards this kind of irrational quibble,

"Do you think that that kind of twisted argument will be accepted?"

Ryner's companion rebutted...

Ryner looked to his side.

Beside him, was a unbelievably beautiful woman...

Under the rays of the red setting sun, beautiful golden long hair. Clear blue eyes. A face that was so beautiful that it exceeded the human expectations, and on the slim body, there was tailor-made armor. A narrow waist, coupled together with a long sword that was not suitable for her slender wrists.

Ferris Eris.

Anyway, she was the beauty that could collapse countries and cities.

It could be even be said, even if the moon pushed over the sun and climbed out, just by being before her beauty, a beauty that would make one feel that the moon might feel embarrassed that it would not reveal itself.

Only that, her voice was calm and monotonous, her expression completely did not change either.

And, she used her cute tongue to lick the last dango left on her hand, although she wanted to eat it, but because it was the last one, if she ate it, there would be none left, what should she do...

Since earlier on she had been this troubled, it made one have some slight suspicion, was she really a beauty...

At this moment, Ferris said.

“Anyway, you sleep too long. According to my observations recently, I have judged that you have already slept all of the time that a normal human needs to sleep. So, according to my judgement, from today onwards even if you don’t sleep there’s a possibility that you will continue living. That’s great. You can stay awake, work for me for the rest of your life. Be happy about this.”

Ryner hearing this, widened his eyes,

“...Wa...you have started to say that completely impossible matter... not sleeping, will make me die.”

Towards Ryner’s retort, Ferris simply nodded,

“Mm-hmm. In the normal situation you would die. But, as long as humans are forced into a corner, they will be able to do anything. So, after today if you dare to sleep, I will punish you. I will call it the “Wa! If I sleep then I will be punished, I’m so scared that I don’t dare sleep!!” plan.

“This is about humans receiving so much punishment, so the habit of not sleeping will form, they can do anything. Before the next academic meeting, I must prepare the essay first... about this essay...”

As she walked, she pulled out something that was drawn since who knows when, it was a depiction of standing before the bed, Ferris was raising a sword, and Ryner with a fearful, scared contorted expression...

Ryner seeing this, couldn’t help but groan,

“Wow, this thing really has a slight realistic feel, you’re really good... I say, that’s not the problem now! Ah—really, I say you are so thorough in your research. Anyway, what does this count for. Firstly, what is that academic meeting. I say have you even participated in that kind of things?”

“Yes. It was established by my younger sister Iris and I, for the sake of exploring the secrets of the world...”

Speaking until there, Ryner interrupted her with a frown on his face.

“Ah~... It’s a game with that girl who squirms and jumps around... Talking about which, this topic is getting off track... anyway, just by giving humans a few punishments doesn’t mean that they will continue to live without sleeping, what kind of punishment are you thinking of using?”

Ferris carefully kept that really realistic drawing back, nodded,

“Mm-hmm. Firstly I’ll gently, use my sword to decapitate...”

“If you even do that once then you’ll never be able to wake up again!!”

Ryner couldn’t help but yell.

Ferris hearing that,

“Yes, then the joke shall end here... about the job.”

“You say it so lightly, I say you, you aren’t thinking of taking the chance when I’m sleeping, to take down my head are you?”

“Ho ho”

“Ah! You laughed just now! You laughed with that 'ho ho' sound!?”

“Mm-hmm. But the essay has already started, so there’s no choice? You’d better submit to your fate.”

“Who would want to submit to that faaaaaate!!”

Ryner cried in agony. Ferris was like usual, completely ignoring Ryner’s words.

“Mm-hmm. Then the legend of the heroes that was passed on in Runa Empire, do you have any leads?”

“Hey, your switching of the topic is really... ah, never mind...”

Ryner momentarily felt weak,

“...But look at the sky, it’s almost dark. We have managed to tide over the sudden matter of having the Imperial Nelpha Mage Knights chase after us, reached the Runa Empire, then now we’re starting to talk about work? Compared to that, shouldn’t we worry about our lodgings for today?”

Ferris nodded too.

“Yes. Right. Then let me change my saying. When you were in Roland, didn’t

you write a report about the Heroes' Relics, and then gave it to Sion? So now you are given the mission to search for the Heroes' Relics."

Ryner suddenly revealed a tired expression.

"No, it's that fellow who took away my report by his own initiative, and he still said something like 'go and gather these Heroes' Relics for me', this kind of request that does not take anyone into consideration, I completely have no motivation..."

"Mm-hmm. Me too. If I weren't dragged into this, if I don't help you, then he is going to destroy my favourite dango store, that person, is really the most despicable... one day I will make him taste pain."

Ryner nodded his head in agreement,

"I agree! I agree to this! About that part, if we join our efforts..."

"Mm-hmm."

Just as the unmotivated spirit of the two was confirmed again, Ferris said,

"Talking about which, did you write about roughly where the Heroes' Relic would be in the report?"

Ryner nodded,

"That, yes. To be more accurate, I only organized the heroes' legends and myths passed down in Roland and the surrounding countries. Of course, the surrounding maps of the approximate locations of the Heroes' Relics have also been looked at."

"Yes. Then, do you remember most of Runa Empire's maps?"

"I already said it, I only remembered the maps of the areas near the locations mentioned in the legends of the heroes. What are you trying to say?"

Towards this question, Ferris pointed straight at the road in front,

"There is probably a place where we can take lodgings for the night straight ahead, tell me. If we continue walking, will we reach there before night falls?"

"Wu"

Hearing this, Ryner stared at the straight path reaching into the distance...

“About that, I’m not sure. I didn’t read anything about legends around this area. Come to think of it, this is the Runa Empire right? It’s different from Roland, it’s a country where religion has a pretty powerful influence right?”

Towards Ryner’s words, Ferris asked,

“What are you trying to say? Unless you are going to explain that you have no knowledge of the geography of this area, a piece of rubbish that cannot be used, this topic?”

Ryner nodded,

“That, so I say on that view point, eh, anyway this is a special place. There is a complete spiritual authority figure that they believe in, that means that that there is the presence of god, and even their magical powers are used by borrowing the power of god, according to that... that means, according to the information that Roland has researched on, those who do not believe, aren’t able to use the magic of this country.”

Ferris hearing this,

“Oh, this seems to be a little troublesome.”

“Yes. If no faith means an inability to use them, then to me who has no faith... these eyes”

Saying that, Ryner pointed to his own eyes.

The place where he was pointing at.

It was his black eyes that never changed, always carrying sleepiness...

And these, were special eyes.

In the middle of these black eyes, although it was usually so faint that it could not be seen, but that red five-pointed star, at this moment it was glowing red, appeared...

Ryner said.

“That means that even if this Alpha Stigma can analyse the magical structure of the other party, I will not be able to use it.”

That was right.

His special eyes had the ability to analyse all magical structures, rapidly turning it into his own, then proceeded with using his own strength.

No matter from what country, whatever special magic, with only his eyes, he should be able to learn it easily...

“I am definitely not going to believe in any divinity. So, I will definitely not be able to use Runa’s magic. Anyway, if god really existed, why would there be wars? Why would there be people who will definitely suffer? If god really existed, then let the world become something where everyone will be equal, where they can have an afternoon nap every day, where they can live peacefully wouldn’t that do?”

But Ferris simply replied,

“Yes. That’s simple. If there really was a god living, God as god, will be very busy. He will have no time to take care of a pervert like you, or the foolish humans who instigate boring wars.”

Towards this, Ryner slightly revealed an approving expression,

“Why do your words feel so convincing... Anyway, although it’s like this all the time, but where did the saying that I am a pervert emerge from! Even though I want to retort you a lot... yes, if I were as powerful as god, if I could live comfortably without working, I would definitely be busy sleeping afternoon naps, so I would have no time to look after those humans who keep doing foolish things.”

“Mm-hmm. If I were god, I would be busy every day because of dangos. Turning all the shops in the world into dango stores. Let the whole country work hard for dangos. Then, I will let the dango tasting competition replace wars, to decide on the territories of each country. The country with the best dango master will win. Then the most impressive thing is, every year I will let the dango masters who performed excellently in these competitions give me dangos... I can finally eat all the first-class dangos in this world. Ah, next year’s dangos, should it be the three coloured ones, or the ones with fillings...”

Towards Ferris who was mumbling to herself and had already sunk into a self-indulgent mood, Ryner couldn’t help but say, “...Your imagination is getting out of hand...”

“Yes. I am starting to feel slightly jealous of god...”

“In addition I slowly feel like working properly too...”

Saying that, Ryner breathed out,

“Alright, let that daydream stop here... All in all, this is Runa, it’s different from our country, religion holds a large power here. And that means, naturally, the stories of the legends are related to the religion.”

“Oh, for example?”

Ryner nodded,

“Yes, for example, “God’s messengers will give God’s blessing to specially recognized humans, to let this person become king” ... something like that, “the Demon appears, only by praying to the God then will the Demon be chased away” ... something like that. Basically it’s like that, most were because of the rulers of that time to protect the country, they created such stories that were beneficial to themselves, but most were lies, and basically all the stories were about the royalty and God.”

“Yes, then after that, what did you want to say?”

“Yes, so I’m saying, most of the legends existed around the capital of the Runa Empire where the royals are living in, that is to say, the areas that I know, are the maps surrounding the capital... then , so, I am completely not aware of the situation surrounding here... it’s like that. How can I know what will happen if we continue to walk down this path, what will there be...”

As he spoke until there, Ferris interrupted him,

“That is to say, anyway your life has no worth, so it is rubbish that cannot be used?”

“...I say, according to what you say, aren’t you rubbish too. You don’t know about the situation of our surroundings right?”

But Ferris shook her head,

“No, I...”

But Ryner stared at Ferris. He had already guessed what she wanted to say.

He stared at her hard—without looking away.

Then for some reason, Ferris who was emotionless ever since just now, suddenly blushed, avoiding Ryner's eyes,

"...That, that problem, let's leave it aside..."

Ryner hearing this,

"Yo, if it were normal, you would say "No, I am a beauty"... right?"

"I, I had no plans to say anything like that."

"Then why is your face so red."

"Wu... it's because of the setting sun, so it looks like that."

But from some time before, the porcelain white skin of yours, had already been flushed until her ears...

Ryner smiled wryly,

"...Alright, I'll leave it at that... Ah, there seems to be a cross section, and there is a sign post."

A cross section had appeared in front of them.

The sign post pointed to left and right paths, pointing in different directions, and with the names of the destinations...



Ferris looked at the sign posts,

“Yes. According to this, On the right side seems to be a village. It’s called Rajit Village.”

Ryner continued,

“To the left is the church. It seems to be called Aschubeg Church. Then, which way shall we go? But, if we have to choose, I feel that we should go to the church, they will let us stay for free... And we’re lucky, Roland and Runa are allied countries. As long as we show them the insignia on our clothes, they will definitely let us stay for the night.”

Ferris also expressed her agreement,

“Yes. Even if it is Runa Empire, in front of strong Roland which has united with Estabul, at the moment they wouldn’t want to instigate a war. They will not treat us harshly. But...” Ferris’ words stopped, Ryner couldn’t help but ask, “Ah? But? Is there a problem?”

Ferris pointed on the ground,

“It’s dropped there, look.”

Ryner heard that, turning in the direction in which she was pointing at, dropped there, it was probably another sign post that had been added, but because the nails were not orderly, so it dropped...

The fallen sign was written like this.

The village of Rajit has been cursed by the Demon.

So, before God has cleansed it, entry is prohibited.

Before the evil is cleansed, do not approach.

Travelers crossing over from the border of Imperial Nelpha,

Please do not head to Rajit village, please move toward Aschubeg Church.

The army of Runa Empire

Words like this were written...

Ryner and Ferris exchanged looks...

“The Demon’s...”

“...curse?”

Ryner frowned,

“The situation seems to be like that. Then we won’t go to Rajit Village. It’s scary, anyway, didn’t I say there is the Demon’s curse. And it says that it’s dangerous so don’t approach it. So like that, we have decided to go to Aschubeg Church. Alright, proceed, let’s go!”

Ryner said, just as he decided to walk left, at this moment, Ferris’s hand stopped him quickly.

“Are you serious? The person who is not afraid of God, is afraid of the Demon?”

Ryner’s brows drew together,

“Ah! Really! Think about our situation. We were only able to frantically cross the boundary today, I’m tired. If we go to those kind of places where it isn’t known whether there is Demon or something else of the sort... That kind of place that seems to have some link to the Heroes’ Relics, then doesn’t it mean we have to go and investigate. That way, wouldn’t it be more tiring? So, all in all, today let’s go to the church and sleep for more or less thirty days, then after I feel in the mood I’ll think about it...”

But at this moment, there was a ‘clang!’ sound, a familiar sharp sound was heard, in a blink of an eye, the sword at Ferris’ waist was unsheathed, landing lightly on Ryner’s neck...

Ryner could only use a sad voice to say at that moment...

“No, that, I know. Although I knew this would happen... But, it’s that, something like this sign that prohibits entry to the village, definitely wouldn’t let suspicious characters like us stay there. That is to say, today we will have to naturally stay outside... Tomorrow, tomorrow is fine too? Anyway let’s go to the

church today...”

But,

“...”

Ferris remained silent, not replying.

She clearly did not say anything...

But Ryner,

“Ah, joking joking! Ah ya, that’s right, what does a Demon refer to? It makes one mind it? It makes me mind that today we will be working the whole night investigating without sleeping... So I beg you don’t put more pressure on the sword on my shoulder...”

Ferris used a speed that could not be seen by the visible eye to sheath her sword,

“Eh? Since you want to work, then we’ve no choice. Let’s go to Rajit Village.”

Hearing this, Ryner’s eyes were half-lidded,

“...I say, according to this situation, if I said that let’s go to Rajit Village four, five seconds later, my arm would be cut off? You should be slightly more merciful...”

But Ferris turned to walk down the right path, replying,

“How could I do something like that?”

Ryner chased after her,

“Liar! You were definitely thinking of chopping it off.”

Ferris shook her head,

“No, really, I didn’t plan to chop off your arm. Even if your arm drops off you won’t die, that’s not fun at all isn’t it? So, I decided to cut off your head...”

Ryner didn’t finish listening to her when he hugged his head...

“Ah, really, even if we don’t go to Rajit Village to search, there is a Demon here...”

“Eh? What did you say?”

“Ah? Ah, nothing nothing, I didn’t say anything... But, what exactly is the Demon?”

The two of them continued with this conversation, walking to Rajit Village which had been cursed by the Demon.

Changing the location.

This was the interior of a dignified building.

Here, within the territory of Roland Empire, there shouldn’t be anything that could surpass this building’s presence.

No matter whether it was the elegant decorations, the large size of the building, or the strict security that ensured that even a mouse would not be able to slip past it, all of this, gave off a feeling as if it could not be compared to others.

No, it was actually built for this purpose, this was to be expected...

This was...

The palace where the king of Roland lived in.

In this castle that was decorated lavishly, in one of the studies that was so simple that it felt like it was illegal, the most powerful person in this country, was as usual, very busy.

In front of the table that had piles of documents, he had already worked hard for more than twenty hours.

Finished signing this, then reaching for the next file...

“...Eh, this is...”

Golden eyes that were beautiful, and at the same time giving off an impression of strong will, narrowed.

Silver hair, pleasing features.

Only at the young age of nineteen, Sion Astal had already sat on the throne of the Roland Empire, he already had the airs of a king.

It had nothing to do with being the prince of the previous king's concubine, his activeness in the war with Estabul Kingdom was surprising, using this he climbed to the high echelons of the Roland Empire Army...

After that, he used that outstanding ability to raise a revolution, removing the previous king who was a tyrant, becoming the Hero King who saved this country.

He miraculously made use of the supreme charisma, confidence and appearances he had been born with, gaining the large support from the people of the country...

In addition the successful suppression of the rebellion in Estabul Kingdom that occurred recently...

He was using more perfect methods, it even made one doubt that he was a human, as the king who ruled this country, he continued to accumulate his achievements...

No, of course, this was only what was said on the outside...

"Huh..."

At this moment, Sion stopped, releasing a breath.

That was right.

The problem, would not be known so easily by the public, actually there were so many problems that it was unbelievable.

"Really... If it's always so busy, I am thinking that I don't want to be king..."

Sion smiled bitterly, muttering to himself.

In actuality, the problem was like the amount of files in front of him, piling up into small mountains...

The rebellion in Estabul that had been taken over by Roland, in the end it was only successful repressed by having the daughter of the king of Estabul, Noa Ehn who was well known by the nobles and people even in his country to join his party...

At this moment, Sion looked at the files in front of him, groaning.

These files, were from the investigation that Sion had requested, reports about the corruption or the outrageous acts that a few nobles were committing in their territories.

And the result...

Was devastating...

It was worse than what he had expected.

The nobles had completely ignored Sion's announcement as the king, completely doing whatever they wished.

But this was normal...

Because from the reign of the previous king, the nobles who had used their powers to do whatever they liked, although they had not rebelled openly against Sion now, but there were some people who indeed had more authority than Sion...

The anti-royalty coalition...

Anyway, if he didn't properly govern these people, it would be impossible to properly rule this country.

Other than that, the problems weren't only these.

The sudden increase in activity of the other countries had also caught his attention and worry.

Although, at the present the internal affairs of his country had not be resolved, even if he wanted to increase the dealings with other countries, the nobles in the country would take this opportunity to...

"Ai..."

Sion gently pressed a hand against his head, sighing again...

Right at this moment!

"Bang— —!"

With this loud sound, Sion's chair was flipped over,

"Wah!?"

Sion fell with the chair. Although he tried his best not to fall onto the ground, but it was too late.

The momentum of the chair was quite strong.

Sion and the chair, fell onto the ground with an ungraceful posture...

He carried a slightly weary expression, looking up, who was it who could slip into the king's study, pass the tight security that not even a mouse could slip through, in addition not being noticed by anyone, suddenly topple Sion's chair.

And raising his head to look, it was a familiar girl.

It was a unbelievably beautiful girl...

Beautiful golden hair, pretty features, wearing a lacy skirt, carrying a bag, it was a beautiful girl with slightly unsuitable clothes...



At this moment Sion,

“Ah, Iris, welcome back. Did you meet with any dangers when coming back from Imperial Nelpha?”

Iris shook her head vigorously,

“No! Don’t worry!”

She replied energetically.

Sion nodded in relief, standing up slowly,

“Eh, then, I want to ask... why did you topple my chair?”

Iris hearing that, didn’t hesitate much, nodding vigorously again,

“Eh, that, because, Ferris Onee-san, said to do it, so Iris did it! Iris is impressive right? I’m impressive right?”

Looking at Iris who had an expression as if she wanted to be praised, Sion smiled wryly,

“Yeah, it’s impressive. Eh, but, why did Ferris want you to topple my chair? Do you know the reason?”

Iris hearing that nodded,

“Yes, it’s like, you know, sighing?”

Sion hearing that problem,

“Ah? Sighing? Eh, that, is that a normal sigh? If you breath out...”

This moment, Iris frantically covered Sion’s mouth,

“Yeah! You can’t breathe it out! You can’t!! Ir, Iris knows! Sighing, it’s when you are tired you will spit it out, if you breathe out like that three times, you will die because of overworking, that’s what Onee-san said.”

Sion hearing that, smiling wryly as he muttered,

“...Here it comes again, Ferris that fellow, always teaching Iris lies...”

At this moment, Iris seemed as if she were very smug, saying,

“So, Iris was very hard working! Sion Onii-san was about to sigh, she quickly

flipped over the chair! Isn't it impressive!"

Sion smiled at innocent Iris,

"Is it... Yes, thanks to Iris, I was rescued by you when I nearly died. Thanks."

"Aheheh. That's superb! I was praised! Onee-san will definitely praise me too! Because, Onee-san, said Sion Onii-san recently became king, that, eh, wu, er, ... rude and unreasonable, tyrant something like that, I forgot, anyway it became this kind of situation, he will be very busy, so he will sigh a lot, even if it is using violence you have to stop him, Onee-san said that..."

Sion smiled wryly again when he heard this,

"...That person, plans to help me change my mood...? No, or is it she wants to simply tease me..."

He hugged his elbows as he sank into deep thought, but in the end he still couldn't understand,

"Eh eh. This is very difficult to judge... Or maybe it's a little, I feel it may be the latter..."

After that, he turned to Iris,

"Forget it, then Iris. Did you bring Ferris and Ryner's report this time?"

Iris nodded her head hard, pulling out a book from the bag on her back, passing it over to Sion.

Sion received the book, opening it...

Inside, it was still the same, filled with incomprehensible drawings that were drawn in Iris' language...

But lately, Sion was slowly starting to understand Iris' language.

It was a drawing of an angel with wings beating up a dog that was drooling, and another one where she put a collar on him and walked him around...

Sion seeing this, asked Iris,

"Isn't this that? Ryner who was called a wild beast by Iris, is being punished the beautiful angel Ferris Onee-san! ...the drawing where he is being dragged around?"

Iris nodded,

“You guessed right! Sion Onii-san, amazing!”

Being praised by Iris, Sion continued to flip through the book.

Next was a drawing of a beautiful angel and a beast seeming to carrying something like a crab’s forceps...

“Eh? What does this mean?”

He asked.

Iris hearing that,

“Eh, that. This is, what is it. Eh, in his hands, like Crab-san, armor carrying a sword, Wild-beast and Onee-san wore that, then, if it were these Crab-san, they could easily cross the country boundaries!”

Sion hearing this, his expression darkened momentarily,

“Wearing armor, easily crossing the country boundaries...? Talking about armor with a sword in hand... Unless it’s the armor of the Mage Knights of Imperial Nelpha? Those people stole the armor of the Mage Knights, using it to cross the boundary...”

Saying until there, his face seemed to relax,

“Really, they really know how to do things. I only managed to pay a visit to Nelpha based on international relations with much difficulty, the peace that was only kept with much hard work, if it becomes the fires of war because of this matter...”

Ah...

Just as he was about to sigh, he realized that Iris was using those large, clear blue eyes to stare at him,

“Ah, no I didn’t sigh?”

“Really? You definitely cannot sigh! If Sion Onii-san dies, Iris will be lonely!”

Sion smiled, patting Iris’ head.

“Yes. So that Iris will not be lonely, I can’t die. But, Iris is the same too? If you

die, because of dangerous matters, I will be sad too?”

Iris carried an uncomprehending expression,

“Ah—? Iris won’t die?”

Sion continued to smile,

“Of course you wouldn’t die, but if you’re doing something dangerous, you may die? If it’s like that, I, Ferris will be sad. So Iris must take care of her body. So, today you should go back home, and rest well. The long journey was tiring for you right? If you don’t rest well, Ferris will definitely be disappointed.”

Iris hearing that, suddenly became frantic,

“Ah! Onee-san will be disappointed! I don’t want that! I, I! I am going to sleep! Immediately going to sleep! So Sion Onii-san must tell Onee-san don’t be disappointed! Must! So it’s like that, good night!”

As she said, not even giving the time for Sion to reply, Iris quickly jumped out of the window...

Sion stared at this in a daze,

“...Wu. Anyway, it’s better for me not to sigh. That would make Iris worried...”

Saying that, he placed that collapsed chair back to its original place, sitting on it, continuing to bury his head in the documents.

At this moment...

This time it wasn’t the window, there was someone knocking on the door,

“Sion, I’m coming in.”

It was the slightly reckless voice of a man.

Without waiting for a reply and walking in, was a red headed man who was tall and had deep lines carved in his face.

A body that was as strong as steel.

A similar colour to his hair, his eyes were red.

Major-General Clough Klom.

This man who was around twenty five years old, besides Ryner and Ferris, he

was now the only person in Roland who called him Sion without any suffixes.

When Sion was still in the army... as the subordinate of the General, now he also took up the duty of being Sion's body guard. Although he was still a Major-General, but from his popularity and ability, it was all the highest quality that could be found in the army of Roland Empire...

Sion looked at Claugh, narrowing his eyes.

That was right. As the right hand of the King of Roland Sion Astal, in actuality he who was the most top quality person in the Roland Empire, but he still kept Major-General Claugh in this position...

It was evidence that Sion did not have complete control of this country.

Originally, it would not be strange even if Claugh took the General's position...

The higher echelons of the army had been given to the nobles.

But even so, Claugh who was merely a Major-General could easily take on and fill the top spot of the army, and because Sion was previously a General, control the entire army.

It was exactly because they weren't noble born, but the people in the army were commoners that they would chase after Sion and Claugh, Sion was then able to borrow the army's prestige, becoming the king of this country...

Using that to suppress the nobles, so that they would not rebel; now it seemed as if the peace could be kept.

Still, these common-born soldiers, living through each day with their noble-born superiors who found fault with everything, and believed and waited for the day that Sion would completely rule over this country.

According to investigations, the nobles who felt unhappy that Sion had become king, had committed an increasing number of cases where the people under Sion were violently treated and abused...

From this angle, they couldn't not deal quickly with the problem of the anti-royal coalition...

Just as he begun to think about this problem, Claugh stared at Sion's face,

“Ah, this fellow, has that expression that says that he is anyhow thinking to give me trouble...”

Sion was slightly surprised,

“Ah? Was my expression that stern?”

Claugh heard that,

“No, it isn’t. It’s still the same, a smiling face that is full of confidence which makes people feel annoyed. But, you almost don’t let us see you troubled. So if we don’t notice, you will bear it until you die, troubled? You’re a person who makes everyone worry.”

Sion smiled bitterly,

“I’m not so weak that I need to be worried by you.”

“That is the problem. If I really throw you down and not care, you will not admit defeat until you collapse. And then, I want to ask you. You, since you started to sit there and work, how long has it been?”

Sion shrugged,

“Eh? I only started working just now...”

Before he finished speaking, another man entered from the door behind Claugh’s back,

“Liar! Claugh-senpai, Sion-san said a lie again. This present Sion-san so as not to make us worry, will definitely tell lies. According to Eslina who I sent to check on Sion-san’s situation, Sion-san after entering this study, at least fifteen hours have passed.”

A man who had slightly curled blond hair and cute blue eyes, giving an impression that he was slender walked in.

Calne Kaiwal.

He was also in the revolution period, along with Claugh, he was one of the important officers that had fought by Sion.

And behind him...

A girl who was dressed in a white dress.

No, this phrase girl, perhaps was not matching with the calm atmosphere she emanated...

Steady blue eyes. Features that were pleasing to the eye. Beautiful brown hair that tumbled to her shoulders.

Eslina Folkal.

In the past, he had single-handedly took up the position of Sion's secretary Fiole Folkal's younger sister.

But.

Fiole because of the anti-royals wanting to show a bit of temper to Sion, had been murdered...

Even so, she had inherited her brother's will, coming to Sion's side... Now, she was Calne's helper, working according to his orders... Sion was slightly unhappy, "Calne, you let someone spy on me... you actually let Eslina do these kind of things?"

Calne puffed out his chest,

"This is for your health management as you work too hard... Now, in this city, this is the most important work. That's why Fiole's younger sister Eslina can take up this important responsibility. Really, if we turn our eyes away for a short while, Sion-san will mess up everything! If you don't rest well, over work yourself, Fiole in Heaven will be angry and come back again? Right, Eslina."

Eslina smiled happily,

"Yes! You can't do this, Your Majesty! Don't always do things that make my brother sad."

Using those features that were like Fiole's to say this...

Sion scrunched up his eye brows,

"Wuwu, what does this count for. Coming to tease me in a group...?"

This was interrupted by a voice outside the door,

"Subordinates who really care for Your Majesty's health, the king of Roland is a blessed person."

A clear voice.

Then, walking in was...

A woman who had long dark green hair that was not often seen in Roland Empire.

Clear blue eyes, soft beautiful features. That dignified aura, straight gaze did not fit with her age of seventeen years, showing her straight-forwardness and intelligence.

Noa Ehn.

The only daughter of the king, of the Estabul Kingdom that had been taken over by Roland.

She had expressed her grief towards the last rebellion of Estabul, using the people as hostages, losing control of the future of the Estabul nobles...

She went against the rebelling nobles and defeated them, and surrendered to Roland, successfully becoming a hero to Roland and Estabul that had been pushed to a lower position, a capable woman who became a noble in Roland...

On the surface, it was like this...

But, in truth it wasn't.

When Roland had taken up certain measures against Estabul, she had protected the hostages, and knowing that she would be in a difficult state, still became Roland's noble, for the sake of protecting the people of Estabul.

This kind of decision, was not easy.

Noa aimed her straight-forward gaze at Sion.

"But, this country needs its king now. If Your Majesty overworks and worsens his health, wouldn't it seem as if he were too obstinate?"

Saying it like this...

Sion said to Noa,

"This is really troublesome, I've let you see the embarrassing side of me. Ehn-san. It's been a long time since we last saw each other. Talking about which, what is the reason for you specially visiting my study today?"

“No, I didn’t find Your Majesty for anything, it’s just that I made an appointment with Major-General Klom to eat dinner together today, but I waited for him and he did not show up, when I wanted to find him, I heard he was here...”

In a moment.

Claugh,

“Ah!”

As if giving out a devastated sound,

“Ah, eh eh, Calne, what time is it now?”

“Ah? Eh, seven o’clock... I say, Claugh senpai, what time did you and Noa-san agree to meet up?”

Hearing this, Claugh’s expression became more and more troubled,

“.....Five o’clock.....”

“Wah!? Two, two hours? You let this beauty... I mean, ah, I beg your pardon. But, you let someone wait for two hours...”

“Wu... shut up, Calne! That, this, Noa, that, there’s many reasons...”

But Noa still remained calm, “I understand. Major-General Klom. As a Major-General, you must have many things to busy yourself with, I can understand that too.”

“Ah, that... Eh. It’s like that. I had many things to settle.”

At this moment, Calne said softly,

“Even if it’s like that, it’s proper manners to notify the woman that you will be late...”

“Enough! Anyway I was so busy that I didn’t have the time, it couldn’t be helped!”

Towards this outburst, Noa nodded,

“That’s right, Calne-san. I heard the rumors that, Major-General Klom seems to have lovers all over the place, just by having these he will be busy enough, to

add on if he is busy with work, of course he won't have any time to contact someone like me."

Saying it like this...

Clough couldn't help but drop his head into his hands.

Followed by,

"Yeah, really, oh yes, Sion, you'd better rest well! Then it's like this, I have something to do, I'll leave first?"

Saying that, he pulled Noa's hand and was about to leave the room...



“Ai, ah, that... Then, it’s like that, Your Majesty. I’ll leave for today...”

Saying that, Noa was dragged off.

The two walked out of the room. At this moment, from outside the door,

“I’m truly sorry. So don’t be angry...”

Noa replied,

“Heh heh. I was joking. But, I’m indeed looking forward to today’s dinner? So I wanted to tease you slightly...”

“Don’t bully me...”

The two of them continued with this conversation, their voices fading into the distance.

These two people, ever since Noa was saved by Claugh, their relationship had been surprisingly good. It seemed like Noa only opened her heart to Claugh...

When they could no longer hear their voices, Sion, Eslina and Calne looked at each other, then laughed.

“Did you see Claugh’s expression just now? That kind of frantic expression was silly. He was seriously frantic, This is the first time I have seen him like that since I meet him.”

Calne nodded too,

“Me too. Claugh senpai is usually shrewish towards his women relationships, he always has an expression as if it is nothing to worry about...”

Then Eslina too, carrying a joyous expression that obscured the girl in her for some reason,

“Are those two dating? If it is like that then they seem like a suitable couple.”

Sion hugged his elbows,

“Calne, what do you think?”

Calne also seriously revealed a troubled expression,

“Wu~, how should I say this. But, if the two of them are seriously dating, then there might be some problems.”

Hearing this, Sion asked,

“Eh? For example?”

“That, Claugh senpai’s relationships with women are fairly complicated, but in truth, he was never serious. Or I should say, if he really found a woman he liked, then he would leave that person.”

Eslina tilted her head,

“Why is that?”

“That, even if you ask me why... I never heard the real reason from him... But I’m also a military officer, it’s probably because, the reason if that we don’t know when we will die, so we can’t find lovers.”

“How can it be...”

Eslina revealed a sad expression,

“If it’s like that, the people who like Claugh-sama... And, Calne-sama are pitiful...”

Calne nodded too,

“But, anyway the present Roland is peaceful, from my angle, we should find a place to settle down... Ah, this should be said to Sion-san right?”

Sion hearing that, frowned,

“Hey, hey, why did the topic suddenly turn to me?”

“That, this is serious, everyone thinks so. We can have a brilliant monarch, then next is not to let this royal blood line be severed and leave heirs behind... This really isn’t a joke? Although this definitely cannot happen, but if you pass away now, then Roland is finished. For the sake of protecting the current peaceful Roland, even if I think that it’s going to be hard work, but if there isn’t you, and your children, then we don’t have the justice in fighting with the nobles. If it’s like this, then Roland will return to the time where the previous king, and the nobles dominated... those dark times... so...”

Then, Calne suddenly smiled meaningfully,

“Quickly find someone to marry, and have children! Do you want to have a

match-make session? It's match-making! The other party will be..."

Saying that, he looked at Eslina, she nodded quickly too,

"For Your Majesty, I will quickly arrange for the other party of the blind date..."

"You don't have to prepare!"

Sion frantically stopped them.

At this moment, Calne and Eslina revealed smug smiles at the same time,

"Then, let's talk about the marriage problem the next opportunity we have, anyway Sion-san for the sake of not letting himself die, has to stop work immediately, go to sleep quickly!"

Sion frowned,

"Ah, then, at least let me finish this file..."

Calne shook his head,

"No. Alright, in the adjacent room, Eslina has already prepared a bed. Go to sleep immediately."

"Wu... you're really capable... Yes, I know. It's just sleeping right? Really, at this rate, by tomorrow the work will increase..."

Calne seeing this, finally revealed a relieved expression.

"Ah, finally he will rest. Then I can at least eat my dinner without any worries. Ah yes, lately there is a little of that, strangely I've been having dreams of Fiole lately, and I'm always lectured that I have to let Your Majesty rest—something of the sort. But, today I can finally sleep well today. Just like that, you have to sleep alright? Understand? Then Eslina, let's go eat, I'll treat you."

"Ah? Really? That's great!"

The two of them spoke, walking out of the room...

Sion helplessly watched them leave the room...

"Talking about which, when Fiole appeared in your dreams, didn't he lecture you on not hitting on Eslina?"

He muttered to himself...

After that, he planned to work, but the hand that held the pen suddenly stopped, turning his face to the ceiling,

“Fine, I’ll rest a while today. If I don’t do that, I feel that you’ll appear again in Calne’s dreams...”

Saying that, he laughed.

After organizing the stack of files that had been completed, he wanted to stand up...

Someone knocked on the door again...

“Eh? Who is it?”

Turning his eyes there, in the doorway where Calne did not shut the door, was a man...

“The door was open, although this is very impolite, but please bear with my interruption, Your Majesty.”

A calm and cold voice.

A polite, and completely emotionless, cold voice.

Towards this...

Sion momentarily, narrowed his eyes,

“It’s Froaude...”

He sat on his chair again, watching Froaude.

A man with pretty long black hair.

He was around the same height as Clough, but he was different from Froaude, he had a slim figure. And he had a rare black ring on his finger.

Although that beautiful feature could make a person stop breathing...

What was most attractive was not these only.

But it was those beautiful eyes that were a little obscured, cold and dark.

Dark blue eyes as if they could freeze...

Major Miran Froaude.

Even if he were under Sion, he was also part of those who shone differently...

He was a welcomed capable person because he wished that Sion would take the throne not limited only to Roland, but the Roland Empire that encompassed the whole Menoris Continent.

He said that the darkness that this tyrant's path needed that was dirty, he would take it all upon himself, and started working under Sion... and he definitely completed all the work perfectly that it made anyone feel annoyed.

Now, under Sion, he had secured his position... not only that, Fiole's work, and the dirty work that had been unable to be given to Fiole was handled by him.

No matter how large the sacrifice, he chose the most effective method.

He, was this kind of man.

Just because of that, Froaude's relationship with Claugh was not good...

Froaude only smiled coldly.

"But Your Majesty's popularity is really admirable. Did you enjoy the resting time that was leftover from working?"

Saying that...

Sion frowned,

"Are you purposefully saying the opposite? You hate Claugh, Calne and the rest right?"

But Froaude shook his head slightly,

"You misunderstand me if you think that I am purposefully saying the opposite. Although it is disappointing, but I seem to be hated by Major-General Klom and Colonel Kaiwal... But I have high evaluations of the both of them. If we're talking about Crimson Finger Claugh Klom, he is a famous military officer known by the surrounding lands. If we're talking about Colonel Kaiwal, as a pawn who would do anything for Your Majesty, he is a very important person as well."

He, said it like that.

Froaude in front of Sion, calmly talked about Claugh and Calne as pawns.

This man, was this kind of person.

Looking at Sion's increasingly stern expression, Froaude amended,

"And, being able to let Your Majesty have some rest is a difficult job for me, but they are able to accomplish it... they are necessary people."

Adding this kind of words. Sion smiled bitterly when he heard them.

"You don't have to waste your energy on that kind of meaningless wording. How you think of my subordinates, this point I am very clear. Towards you, everything is a pawn to progressing on the tyrant's path right? And, if it isn't necessary, no matter who the opposite party is, you would throw them aside without thinking. You are this kind of person. And you definitely have what I don't have, the ability to take this kind of burden. I have nothing to complain about."

Froaude hearing this, a slight smile that conveyed his happiness appeared on his icy features, bowing his head slightly.

"Towards your generous praise, I will accept it very happily."

Sion shrugged,

"And then? What is there for me today? The files that you wish for me to read, I have read them. And placed them there."

Froaude hearing that, bowed his head again,

"I am very sorry for taking up your time and energy. Then..."

Saying that, as if wanting to ask, those chilly eyes, looked in his direction.

Sion carried a tired expression, falling into deep thought.

The files that Froaude had provided.

It was something about what he had handed in earlier, a more realistic problem.

Firstly, it was the movements of every country in this Menoris Continent...

About the northern military country Stohl, that was slowly invaded by a new small country Gastark.

No, not only this.

Gastark had now conquered several small countries, expanding its power rapidly...

And, towards Gastark's movements, every country was starting to strengthen its military...

All these were signals to a large scale war that would occur quickly.

Until today, due to the balance in powers, in this part of the Menoris Continent that was comparatively more peaceful, there might be a war erupting...

If that happened, Roland would enter this conflict sooner or later...

And, the present Roland...

At this moment, Froaude as if knowing what Sion was thinking, said.

"The present Roland, is unable to go against the other countries that have strengthened their military. Taking a step back, even if we have swallowed Estabul Kingdom, through Noa Ehn-san, but that northern country Stohl has five times the military power of Roland. To talk about it more in depth, even if it is the territory of strong Stohl, that country Gastark can still invade it, to fight with them, is definitely impossible. Although it's like that..."

As if continuing his words, Sion said as if he were groaning,

"Although it's like that... Now, Roland is unable to strengthen its military, unable to expand its territory. Because the internal affairs are too messy. If we attack other countries, I'm afraid, the internal nobles will take the chance. If this happens, we'll lose everything..."

Saying that, Sion smacked his mouth in his mind.

For the sake of creating a country that would be peaceful and free from war, he had become the king.

Removing his father who continued meaningless wars, thinking that from

then on a warless, uncorrupted country where everyone could live on smiling could be created...

But.

Reality, was always unable to satisfy human desires.

Reality...

Froaude used a calm voice,

“Our present duty, is to quickly unify Roland Empire. Not a superficial peace, but to chase away the nobles of the older times, creating a place where Your Majesty can build the true Roland Empire... For that, the fastest method is...”

But what Froaude wanted to say, Sion, already knew.

Reforms.

Kill all the nobles that went against Sion.

And...

Froaude continued.

“About that, I did write about it in the report I handed in... shall we first express our willingness to accept them? In that short period of time, completely accept all the requests that the nobles raise. Just like the reign of the previous king, can we return to that time where there was corruption and bribery?”

Sion frowned,

“Then, let the nobles relax their guard, focus them to one place, and kill them all... is that it?”

Froaude nodded,

“It’s the fastest way for Roland Empire to settle down.”

But at this moment, Sion looked at Froaude’s face,

“...But, to accept the nobles, even if it’s for a very short period of time, do we have to go back to the period of time where a large number of citizens starved and died?”

Towards this question, Froaude simply,

“Is that a problem?”

He asked in reply.

Towards this man, the phrase citizens dying, had no particular meaning.

And,

“...”

Sion sank into deep thought.

No, that wasn't right...

Citizens dying.

Towards himself, it was meaningless too.

This point, he was clear.

As a king, citizens this word, was only a number.

For the sake of saving a large number of people, even if it were sacrificing a few people it also couldn't be helped.

If it couldn't be done, then he had no right to be king.

This point, he was very clear.

Since the moment he had become king, he was aware of that.

As long as it was pretty words that only settled superficial matters, it was unable to change the country.

But.

But, even so...

At this moment, Froaude narrowed his eyes slightly, using that usual emotionless, icy voice to speak to Sion who was in deep thought.

“...Are you troubled? Then let me think of other plans. Yes. You are a famous monarch. You are the rare monarch that will bring us to our peak, ever since Roland was born. A government that will benefit the people, in the past the nobles that bullied you would not be able to go forward with it, and this will make good use of them. If this continues, just by spending a certain amount of time, one day, all the people, all the nobles, will listen to your will.

"But, the sad reality is..."

"At that moment, Roland will be destroyed by other countries..."

This was reality.

Sion also knew this clearly.

In addition according to Ryner's report, there were people from other countries appearing in Imperial Nelpha, acting secretly.

There was almost no time left.

He had no choice but to make a decision.

"..."

At this moment, a trace of a smile appeared on Froaude's lips,

"But, today you should rest. Please don't work too hard, if your body condition deteriorates, this will be troubling. Everything will go according to Your Majesty's decision... no matter what kind of decision you make... I, will follow your orders. Please think carefully..."

Saying that, he bowed his head, walking out of the room.

But.

Sion still didn't move.

Only, only, silently, gazing into the empty air for a long time...

"..."

The night, had darkened.

It was late at night...

In the courtyard connected to the palace.

Noa Ehn was slightly happy looking at the dark night sky and the shining stars.

"We came slightly later."

She said with a slightly moved voice.

Claugh hearing that,

"...You, unless you are purposefully angry at me because I didn't meet you at

the arranged time?”

Asking that, Noa hearing that, turned back in surprise, Claugh was walking behind her leisurely, looking to be troubled...

Seeing that, she smiled,

“No. Ah, unless, I look like those kind of woman who will be angry over such petty matters?”

Claugh’s expression was even more troubled,

“No, although it’s not like that, but women are hard to understand...”

“Oh dear, Major-General Klom understands females very well.”

“I say, don’t always call me Major-General Klom. Claugh is fine.”

Noa hearing that, smiled happily, raising her head to look at the sky again...

“But, I’m really not angry. It’s just that I rarely can come outside at this time of the night. And, under this beautiful sky... I feel slightly mystified that’s all... Anyway, I was originally a princess of a country...”

In that split second, Claugh revealed a slightly awkward expression, even if she didn’t look at his face, Noa was clear about that.

Noa smiled again.

Then, she narrowed her eyes slightly.

Ever since she was born, even when she was a princess, and Estabul was destroyed.

Everything, was because of Froaude’s plan. The nobles who had supported Noa, were all killed.

No, if it wasn’t Claugh who had come to save her in the end, Noa would have died by Froaude’s hand.

And she had nearly been killed under the sin of taking the people of Estabul and Roland as hostages...

That was right.

Now, Noa could live here comfortably, was because of Claugh...

But, Claugh always used a guilty expression to look at her.

Towards this, Noa was happy.

No, it wasn't because she felt happy that she was being pitied. That was not what she wished. She did not live because she was pitied by others.

It was only, Roland had swallowed the people of Estabul and, it was a person who was called the right hand of the king...

That there was of someone like Claugh.

She was happy because of this.

People who could understand the pain of others.

Straight-forwardly hating the deaths of people, feeling sad because of the deaths, by the side of this country's king.

Towards this, she was extremely happy.

She was clear about it.

King, that was the job of balancing the people's lives.

So that the greater part could be saved, the smaller parts had to be sacrificed.

This was clear to her.

The country, universe, just by using something as pretty as the night sky, would be unable to move, this was well known to her.

Even so, she thought, by the king's side, there should be some people like Claugh.

People who could laugh, peacefully living in this word.

Even if other people looked down on them, these things didn't exist...

Even if others mocked them, this kind of thing was so pretty that it was just empty words...

Even so, she thought, this kind of idealistic person, had to be by the king's side.

So, Claugh was a necessary character for this country. For this country's peace. And for this country's Estabul citizens, so that they could live on smiling.

If there were only people like Froaude who had dangerous thoughts, then this country would fall into ruin.

So...

Noa looked at Claugh.

In the past in Estabul, Crimson Finger Claugh Klom was almost like a terrifying phrase like the demon.

He held that kind of power.

But even if it was like that...

Claugh used a gentle expression that was completely opposite of what a demon would have, looking at the sky with Noa.

“Is it really that pretty? I don’t think it has changed. Or is it saying that? In Estabul, is looking at the sky different?”

Saying something clumsy as if he completely didn’t understand a woman’s thoughts...

Noa laughed.

“The sky is the same. Perhaps the stars are slightly different... but compared to that... even if it is the same sky, because the people I am looking at it with are different, the environment is different, the feelings of the person watching it will be different?”

Hearing that,

“Eh? Is that so?”

Hearing these kinds of words as if it did not involve him, Noa laughed again.

Just now her words, from the bystander’s perspective, it might be interpreted as,

“Because I am looking at the sky with you, so I think it’s beautiful”

That kind of meaning...

But as she expected, this man, completely didn’t feel it.

This was strange.

In any case, he was older than Noa by seven years...

At this moment, Claugh noticed Noa was smiling at him,

“Ah? What is it. Is there anything funny?”

Noa hearing that,

“Eh. Ah, no, it’s late, let’s go back.”

“What is it? What a strange person...”

Saying that, the two continued to walk again.

Walking through the courtyard, the place where Noa lived, was built in a place very close to where Sion lived.

In the past, there was a noble who lived here, but when Sion and Claugh and the rest started the revolution, the noble had been chased away with the previous king, after that it became a building with no one living in it...

Noa at present was living here with several servants.

Before the door of this building...

Noa turned around, facing Claugh,

“I was very happy today. Thank you.”

Saying that, lowering her head...

Claugh seeing that, his eyebrows drew close,

“Ah—that, I won’t be late next time... I apologise for today.”

He answered,

“Oh dear... does that mean, you won’t call me out again?”

“That, it’s not the problem of whether we’ll have a date together, I will have to take you around the castle from time to time right?”

Hearing this, Noa’s elegant face revealed a slightly mischievous smile,

“Is that so... Claugh-sama didn’t come today, I was very worried, thinking that without my noticing, I did something wrong, making you hate me.”

Claugh hearing this, suddenly became frantic,

“Ah? Hate? Slip? There’s nothing like that. I only forgot today, it’s not because I hate you...”

At this moment, Clough realized that Noa was smiling as she looked at him, starting to feel slightly unhappy...

“Ah, you... you’re teasing me again aren’t you?”

Noa politely bowed,

“But, today I was really happy. Thank you...”

Thanks to you, I feel like I can be saved...

What she wanted to say at the end...

But she didn’t say it.

Claugh clumsily waved his hand at her,

“Ah, you don’t have to be so polite, go to bed quickly. Seventeen year old children can’t stay up too late.”

Noa entered the door as she replied,

“Then, please don’t tempt this kind of cute seventeen year old.”

“What!? I, when did I tempt...”

Noa smiled at a nervous Clough,

“I was joking. I only thought that I was being tempted...”

“Huh!? I say you...”

“Then, good night.”

Saying that, Noa walked into the house.

Entering her quarters, like usual, three servants came to greet her.

Noa smiled,

“I’m sorry, I returned this late. Because I was with Major-General Klom, I accidentally...”

But, Noa spoke until here, her words stopped...

In front of her there was an unbelievable scene. The maid who always took care of her, her head suddenly, fell with a plop sound.

Seeing this,

“Ya...”

Noa was about to scream...

But, the necks of the other two servants, had swords positioned against them...

Looking at her surroundings, ever since some time ago, Noa's surroundings, were enclosed by a group of men dressed completely in black...

Noa momentarily swallowed her scream.

She immediately understood the present situation.

At this moment, a man slightly taller than the other...

A man who could be compared to Claugh said,

“Your adaptation is very quick. Clever missy. You should be very clear of your situation?”

Noa looked at the man,

“If I dare shout, then the servants will be killed. Is that so?”

The man nodded.

“If you dare shout we will kill the servants. If you dare try to escape we will kill the servants. If you don't follow what we say, we will also kill the servants.”

He calmly said.

He was strong. That could be told just by looking.

Now the men who surrounded Noa, there was a total of eight.

Eight was clearly a lot, they were only surrounding a woman, but she could tell that they weren't relaxed at all, there was no opportunity to take hold of.

The situation couldn't be worse than it was now.

Under this situation, what could she do?

Even though she thought hard, but she couldn't come up with anything.

If it were Claugh, even if he were facing these kind of opponents, he would be able to save the servants, escaping from here...

She looked at her slender hands, smiling bitterly.

Towards herself, this was impossible. She was too weak.

If that was the case, the only thing that she could do, was only...

At this moment, the tall man said,

"Then, will you follow our orders?"

".....What are you planning to make me do?"

"That... Will you first undress yourself?"

In a moment, she stiffened, feeling her body trembling slightly.

From the cold smiles on the men's faces she could guess it.

"..."

She wanted to cry...

She had to go along with the attitudes of these people.

Even if she tried to pretend that she was strong, in truth, she knew clearly that she was trembling uncontrollably with fear.

She was scared.

By this kind of person...

Going along with his wishes.

Gritting her teeth hard, Noa desperately tolerated her body that would tremble if she relaxed, saying.

"If I follow your orders, will you promise not to harm the servants?"

Towards this,

"That's right."

The man dressed in black nodded simply, promising.

But, this was obviously a lie. The servants, were, already beyond help.

And, me too.

These people were probably, assassins that the nobles of Roland had sent.

To rape me, threaten, then kill me...

Then, if I'm killed, the people of Estabul will probably once again, because they are dissatisfied towards Roland... and, it will be towards the king of Roland who protected me to release their ire, again raising the rebellion flag.

That must be their plan.

The people of Roland will die in large numbers again...

"..."

I, can't be killed by these people.

Then, the only thing I can do...

I smiled, saying to the men.

"Alright. Then I'll undress."

Saying that, bowing, making, an action as if to undress...

In her mouth, she wanted to bite her tongue...

But.

"Don't joke!"

The man's hand immediately reached over, stopping Noa's mouth, clutching her mouth, keeping sure that it won't close...

"Ah..."

She had been seen through...

This time, Noa really despaired.

Even death, was not allowed.

The man grabbed Noa's face, dragging her as he pulled her up,

"If you kill yourself now, we will be very troubled. The client wished that you be raped first, then be killed, this kind of situation. If you die of your own action, then our client will be very angry. Alright, everyone, it seems like this lady hates to undress herself. Then let's help her strip."

The men crowded around her.

She was scared.

Couldn't help,

"Clau..."

As she opened her mouth, a cloth was shoved into her mouth roughly, she couldn't even shout.

The man's hand, reached towards her clothes.

She frantically wanted to wave it away, but unfortunately she was unable to.

She was already helpless.

At this moment...

Noa, gave up, resisting.

She only, looked at the closed door that was connected to the outside...

Outside, just now, she was still with Clough... thinking about that, the memory of her smiling.

Today, was really a happy day.

Ever since she lost Estabul, the nervous feeling... today, she finally felt a little relaxed.

Eating with Clough, in the night courtyard, watching the stars...

Like the past...

She didn't carry any responsibilities, as if she were a normal seventeen year old...

She confirmed it again, the beauty of the stars, something as small as that, could become a happy memory...

Today, she was really, happy.

But...

This door that was connected with the outside, was so far away...

In Noa's eyes...

The tears that she had been resisting desperately all this time, from the start...

One drop, fell.

Time backpedaled slightly...

Watching Noa's back slowly disappeared into the house, Claugh hugged his elbows,

".....ah, women are really hard to understand..."

He moaned.

No, the other women said that they didn't mind...

But he didn't know why, he felt that he was always confused by Noa's words.

Anyway, ever since they first met, when he went against Froaude, he was always confused by her.

Suddenly shouting, then making a deal that the detestable Froaude would agree too, this time revealing that innocent expression that was like a child's, earlier that had confused Claugh.

Even if that was the case, he understood, she wasn't a normal girl.

She was only a seventeen year old girl, in her eyes, there was already a kind of intelligence whose age couldn't be estimated... and she had carried some kind of huge determination, coming to Roland.

Because of that, he could not throw her aside and not care.

Her slender, beautiful hands, if they wished to grab onto something, he would want to help her.

Thinking until there, Claugh laughed,

“I finally understand why her popularity was so high among the Estabul people.”

He muttered to himself, planning to leave from the door of Noa’s house, at this moment.

Claugh’s eyes, suddenly, as if changing persons, sharpened and narrowed...

“Eh?”

Suddenly, feeling an uneasy feeling.

Although he did not know why he felt that, but, there was a sense of uneasiness.

He turned around again, looking at the house that Noa had walked into.

It was slightly different from usual.

He felt.

Although he didn’t know what, but, there was something slightly different.

Claugh, thought that way.

There was an atmosphere that made one feel unhappy.

It was the same feeling, he had felt many times on the battle field. There was a prickly feeling on the back of his neck, a strange uneasy feeling. He couldn’t walk forward. Something in his body was warning him.

This feeling, he had guessed previously, and previously it was not unfounded, but... Clough was clear, because to the people who had spent a lot of time on war, this feeling had to be followed.

But this feeling, towards him, it was not to walk into the house that Noa had walked into.

At this moment, it was as if proving this uneasy feeling...

All the lights in the house disappeared...

After that, the darkness seemed to creep in from the surroundings...

“Don’t go in. Don’t go in. There’s danger. Don’t go in.”

It seemed to warn, that detestable atmosphere increased in strength...

This moment,

“Damn it!”

Claugh rushed in. Thinking to use the momentum to force open the door, rushing into the house.

At an unbelievable speed.

Using all the necessary time, the moment shortened, kicking open the door of the house.

Followed by,

“Noa! Are you alright!!”

In the moment when he rushed in, the house was filled with darkness...

His vision was almost blinded.

Even if it was the darkest night, there would be moonlight. It wouldn't be like now, he couldn't see anything.

And the darkness here was so large that it felt unnatural...

“...”

Claugh's eyes sharpened.

This was a darkness created through magic, it was one of Roland's magic, and, it wasn't a simple magic.

The more darkness to cover an area, the more it taxed the caster's strength.

And at this door, there was certainly a considerable length, this space had been completely stained black proved...

It was clear that the person who was using this magic, was a capable person.

And in the darkness, there wasn't any sound.

The opponent was waiting quietly. Waiting for Claugh to move to find Noa. Even if they didn't know whether Claugh would move, the other side would attack.

In the beginning, this was a fight that did not favor him.

The side that moved first, would lose. This point, was easily seen. But, Claugh didn't have the leisure to wait for the opponent to move. The more time was wasted, the more danger Noa would be in.

Claugh stared at the darkness, walking toward the middle of the room.

No, not only that, he also said to the surroundings,

"Hey, there's no time. Quickly attack..."

At this moment...

With a "pwesh" sound, like he expected, something cut through the air towards Claugh...

Indeed, like what he had predicted, the opponent's movements were very agile.

Although he was very near, but he completely couldn't feel the presence of the opponent. And they had used some method, attacking Claugh.

Claugh completely couldn't dodge. No, it should be said that it would be better if he didn't dodge?

Only, he tilted his body slightly, accepting this blow...

Psah...

A sharp sound of something entering flesh.

From the feeling he understood. It was a blade. Claugh felt a blade stab into his left arm.

The person that had stabbed Claugh with the blade,

"Ha. I thought the hero of the army would be impressive, so he's this standard only. Bearing this wound perhaps you may be unable to fight..."

But, his words stopped here.

In the darkness there was only a strange 'clack' sound.

At the same time, the darkness covering the entire room disappeared...

His vision suddenly expanded.

Claugh had just by using the blade stabbed on his shoulder, only looking at

the man dressed in black who had been unable to move when he broke his neck.

Then surveying his surroundings, confirmed that there were many men dressed in black preparing themselves.

And Noa's body...

Seeing her, Claugh's eyes narrowed even more.

Her clothes had been stripped entirely. Her body was naked without a single garment. Her hands and feet had been tied... Something had been stuffed in her mouth too, and those things on the ground, were also tied up...

Crying.

From those, always filled with confidence eyes, tears were rolling down...

Looking at this scene, Claugh's eyes narrowed even more, sharpening.

Pulling out the dagger in his arm, throwing it to the ground, he used a slightly trembling, muffled voice,

"...What have you done to her?"

At this moment, standing by Noa's side, a man who could be compared to Claugh replied,

"We haven't done anything. The lookout notified us, your movements seemed to indicate that you had noticed our existence. So we were preparing traps to deal with you, our work hasn't progressed. But thanks to that, we were able to injure you..."

But Claugh stared at the man,

"Nothing at all? Then, why is she crying?"

The man revealed a mocking smile,

"No matter what, you will be able to do nothing. Just that wound..."

"I don't want to hear your nonsense! I'm asking you, why is Noa crying, didn't you hear that!!"

Followed with a shout that could almost shake the building, Claugh charged at

the tall man...

And the men dressed in black moved at the same time...

Pulling out knives, towards Claugh...

But.

Claugh raised his right arm.

In a moment, the clothes on Claugh's right arm were shredded, the tattoos of magical formations on his arm started to glow...

Six men dressed in black attacking Claugh, in that moment, were cut into pieces...

Unbelievably strong.

The people who were there, probably none of them were able to understand what had happened.

It was like a fight between grown-ups and children...

Looking at this, the tall man beside Noa,

"Im, impossible. What, what is happening... Wa!?"

At this moment, the man dressed in black quickly pulled out the knife at his waist, charging towards Claugh who was rushing over...

But Claugh didn't even dodge.

He used the arm with glowing tattoos, stopped the knife directly...

Another 'psah' sound again.

The knife sank into Claugh's palm...

But Claugh didn't even stop because of this. In the moment he caught the man...

Indeed, without realizing what had happened, the man's wrist, was crushed,

"Ah, yaaa....!?"

The cry didn't even reach its peak, this time he caught the man's head, slamming it against the wall.

The man tried to resist, but, he was slammed again.

Once, twice, thrice.

Using a shocking arm strength.

The man started not to move.

Then Claugh looked at the man, using an expression as if he were looking down on an ant to look at him,

“Don’t think you can die so easily. For the price of making Noa cry, did you think that this would settle it? I will cut your body into many tiny pieces...”

But the man raised his head.

“...Wu.....Didn’t, didn’t think, he would be so... it’s, it’s like, a monster... but, but, I, am a professional. This kind of interrogation, I wouldn’t... tell you, the client’s, name.”

“Ah?”

When he looked at the man’s face, the man smiled coldly, seeming to bite on something in his mouth, gritting his teeth. At the same time, there was a crack sound...

In a moment, the man vomited blood and died...

Claugh seeing that, smacked his mouth,

“Che... this bastard... swallowing poison and committed suicide...”

Saying that, he threw the man’s corpse on the ground.

The looking at Noa...

“Ah... that...”

He tried as much to move his eyes from that naked body, approaching her in the dark, untying the ropes around her hands and mouth and mouth, “Noa, are you...”

Before he finished speaking,

“Cla,Claugh!? Are you alright!?”

He was rebutted,

“Ah? That, I... I mean, what are you referring to?”

For some reason, Noa's face had an angry expression that said 'what do you mean what am I referring to!',

“Shoulder! And hand! Aren't you very strong!? What were you doing! For, for protecting me, receiving this kind, those kind of wounds...”

She was really angry.

She looked at the wounds on Clough hand and shoulder as she fumed, desperately, trying to stop the blood from flowing out of the wound...

Clough seeing that,

“Ah, this, that kind isn't even called a wound.”

“Is, is that so? Then, then, it will heal quickly?”

“It will heal quickly. Compared to that, you...”

He wanted to ask...

“Ah? Me...?”

She revealed a surprised expression...

Then in a moment, her expression started to stiffen...

She pressed close to Clough. The blood on his shoulder dirtied her beautiful dark blue hair, but she didn't care, only hugging him...

“...”

She was trembling.

Tears seemed to want to flow out from her eyes.

She should be quite scared. In front of Froaude, she was able to put up that strong image, now, she was trembling...

It was like, a young child.

A child who was fearful of the night's darkness. A child who was unable to live on alone.

Clough seemed to want to stop her trembling, hugging her head.

The two of them, were silent for a moment...

Very quiet.

The people in this mansion, had all been killed.

Tonight was a quiet night.

The wind was quiet... If nothing like this had happened, she would probably be smiling...

Claugh hugged her, maintaining this, time passed...

She,

"It's, it's alright. I'm fine. I... They didn't do anything to me. I, was saved again by Claugh..."

Her voice had resumed its normalcy by now.

Claugh seeing this,

"I'm sorry, I came late, were you scared?"

Noa shook her head gently, smiling,

"No. This kind of matters, I'm already accustomed to it. Because, I am a princess of a country?"

Saying that kind of joke, forcing herself to be strong.

Saying that, she was already fine... forcing herself.

She was indeed a strong person.

Claugh thought.

Watching her tears continue to slide down, but it did not affect her beautiful and elegant face...

Claugh smiled gently.

At this moment,

"Ah—, you were looking at my face, you're mocking me? Looking at girls' faces and making fun of them is very impolite?"

Watching Noa gather her courage to be angry, Claugh smiled bitterly,

“No, I only saw Noa saying that she was not scared, forcing herself, I felt that it was interesting.”

Noa hearing that, her expression resumed being serious...

Then...

Looking at Claugh...

“.....Yes... perhaps it is forced. I am truthfully very scared, trembling... but, but, I don't know why, but a voice deep in my heart was telling me, it's alright. There definitely, definitely will be a way out. I know you... Crimson Finger Claugh Klom will come... But, you really came. So next time, I wouldn't be so scared.”

She said that...

“...Ah? That means, every time every time you meet danger, I will come and save you? How troublesome.”

“Saving a damsel in distress is a knight's duty? Or is it to be said, because the person you have to save is me, so you will feel unsatisfied?”

Claugh scratched his head,

“...No, it's not like that... Yes. Then...”

Saying that, he stood up, walking over without looking at Noa, finding her clothes, throwing them to her.

“Next time, I will arrive more quickly.”

At this moment, from behind him, Noa's voice spoke with a slight happiness that he did not know of the reason behind it, “Alright”

Gently replying.

“Ah, then, quickly dress, I'll wait for you. Of course, following this...”

Claugh didn't turn around, nodding,

“Yes. Who is the person attacking you... and, what will happen after today... there is a need to investigate...”

Saying that, Claugh's eyes, moved to the open door, looking at the stars

outside the house.

Yes, A calm night.

But, the things that were about to happen in Roland...

A calm night.

But, from just now, perhaps it was a trick of his mind, Claugh felt, the wind was becoming stronger.

Chapter 2: The same beauty

Changing location...

It was a place where there was nothing. There was only hills, farms, and a few houses.

Inside of the Runa Empire.

Ryner and Ferris had completely ignored the prohibition sign, heading toward Rajit Village.

The sun had already set in the west, the sky was slowly darkening.

Ryner looked to the sky, using a sleepy expression like usual to say:

“Ah~ Look, didn’t I say so before? I said we should go to the church. Hasn’t the sun set now? And what kind of village is this where it’s so distant, it doesn’t seem as if there is anything... Can we really find somewhere to stay? Since there are signs prohibiting entry, the inns should have closed down? Anyway, some corner of this desolate village may have been cursed by the Demon?”

His tone was unhappy, Ferris said to him:

“Yes. Isn’t it because it received the Demon’s curse that it became desolate?”

Ryner hearing this, looked again at the village that did not seem to have any scenic spot, only depending on farming as their source of income, and really did not have anything outstanding.

“No, I feel that the bad scenery, has no relation with the Demon’s curse...”

At this moment, they discovered that a villager had walked out from one of the houses, Ryner asked quickly:

“Ah, the lady over there, please wait, we have something to ask you... is there any inns in this village...”

Before he finished speaking, the female villager saw Ryner—

“Wu, ah...?!”

Suddenly she ran away, hiding back into the house.

Ryner seeing this, revealed a slightly surprised expression.

“Wu... what was that, what was going on? Why did she suddenly run away?”

Ferris hearing that, replied with her usual bland tone:

“Yes. That woman’s judgment was right. At this time of night, meeting a pervert like you, it wouldn’t be strange if she escaped.”

Here she goes again...

Ryner said:

“Ah, if she really escaped because of me, then that would really be a shock...”

“Wu. I think that shouldn’t be wrong.”

“Ah, don’t rub salt on the wound. Wu...”

At this moment he saw a male villager walking towards them...

This time, Ryner used a tone that was much gentler than previously to ask:

“Ah, excuse me, the man over there...”

“Wu?! ”

The person escaped again...

Ferris seeing this said:

“It seems to be the case. You have reached the extent in the realm of accomplished perverts where people will know that you are a pervert just by looking at your face. Should I praise you?”

She said with an indifferent cadence, Ryner was a little disappointed...

“What kind of face do I have... Ne, what do you think of that person’s response? It’s obvious, there’s something strange about this? I deliberately used a seemingly youthful and charismatic voice to greet them, how can they escape like this... What is wrong? What happened to this village?”

Ferris replied simply:

“So it’s said that there is a demon’s curse?”

“So we were talking about it earlier, what kind of curse is it? I wanted to ask someone, but no one is willing to answer. What’s going on...”

At this moment, another villager appeared...

Ryner said upon seeing the situation:

“...If I appear again, it’ll probably be the same response as just now. It’s never ending...”

Ferris said:

“Alright. Then, let me go this time? I’ll let you see, a beauty like me who can be thought to be an angel, has a great difference compared to a perverted man like you.”

Ryner shrugged.

“Then let me see your abilities.”

“Yes. I’m going.”

Ferris said, then walked towards the villager.

“Hey, the sir over there, please wait.”

She used a tone that was very far away from ‘good friends’ to say that.

The villager seeing the situation—

“Wu...”

Before the villager screamed, Ferris had already disappeared.

Actually she moved so fast that anyone would think that she had disappeared. In a moment, she actually appeared in front of the villager who had turned around to escape...

She still used an unfriendly tone to say:

“I have something to ask...”

“Ah?!”

The villager turned around, getting ready to run.

But, Ferris blocked the villager again...

After that, no matter how the villager tried to escape, Ferris would always appear in front of where he was about to run to...

“What, what is going on?!”

The villager was about to cry, yelling loudly, in extreme terror.

Ferris nodded and said:

“Wu. From his terrified expression, the demon’s curse is pretty scary.”

She said that...

Ryner couldn’t help but mutter in his heart.

(That’s not right, it’s because you’re scarier than the demon...)

Ryner thought secretly in his heart, as he walked slowly to the unmoving villager who was frozen to his original position.

“Eh, it looks like you’re willing to listen to us now... I want to ask... what is the demon’s curse? Why is entry prohibited to this village?”

When Ryner finished asking, the villager’s face turned white immediately...

“I, I can’t answer...”

His voice was trembling. It was obvious, his appearance was odd.

Ryner and Ferris seeing this, exchanged looks...

Ryner asked again:

“You can’t answer? What does that mean? If you tell us, will something bad happen...?”

But, the villager used a trembling voice to say:

“It’s, it’s the mountain... we’re possessed by the demon in the mountain... so, so every day...”

The villager started to say something that contradicted himself.

Ryner asked:

“The demon in the mountain? Possessed? That’s what we wanted to ask...”

In a moment.

“N, no?! I, I didn’t say anything about a mountain?! I didn’t say anything at all?! I will, will be killed... killed... I... Wa~”

The villager said and escaped.

This time, Ferris didn’t chase after him. There couldn’t anything more asked from the villager right? It was obvious, there was something wrong with his mentality.

Ryner hugged his elbows when he saw this...

“About his words earlier... What do you think?”

Ferris looked around her as she said:

“Wu. They seem to be scared of something. Have you discovered it? The villagers are watching us behind the windows?”

Ryner hearing this, looked around too...

In every room of each house, there were people at the windows watching them with eyes that were so tired that they seemed dead...

Ryner shrugged when he saw this...

“...Even if we beg them to let us stay for one night... it seems as if no one will heed us...”

Ferris nodded her head too...

“So that’s why I hate traveling with a pervert. Even finding a place that is livable is...”

“Ah, don’t say it again...”

At this moment Ryner stopped speaking again,

He saw a sixteen seventeen old girl, running towards them desperately from the back of the village...

There were five big men chasing after her.

“Brat... escape...”

“It’s you... what were you thinking...!!”

Because they were at a distance, they couldn’t hear clearly, but the men seemed to be shouting something.

It seemed, these men didn’t seem to be playing hide and seek with the girl...

Ryner seeing this said:

“Eh? What are those people doing...”

But, he didn’t finish speaking.

Something unbelievable was happening in front of them.

The men caught up with the girl, she was violently struck at. The girl flew out, landing on the ground...

“Eh?! What are those people doing! It seems like they are not being merciful?”

Ferris nodded her head when she heard this.

“Yes. It seems so. It seems as if the girl is about to be killed by men who have special tastes for girls like you. Wu... it’s convenient.”

“Ah? Convenient? What do you mean... ah, I see...”

At this moment, Ryner seemed to think of something, punching his palm...

“It’s really convenient. Then—”

“Yes.”

The two exchanged looks...

Although the girl suffered from a strong impact, sprawling on the ground, but she still tried hard to stand up, attempting to continue escaping, Ryner and Ferris rushed towards her...

It was at an unbelievable speed.

The men dragged the girl up, about to start hitting her again...

Ryner had appeared behind them suddenly, grabbing the man’s arm, using his sleepy eyes to look at the man...

“Uncle, uncle. It’s not good hitting children right?”

“You, who are you? Ah?! Don’t butt in, stranger!”

The man threw off Ryner’s hand, about to start hitting the girl again, Ryner grabbed him again, using a slightly tired voice to say: “Don’t let me repeat myself. At least let me listen to the reason, the reason! Why do you treat the child...”

At this moment, Ryner looked at the girl on the ground, she looked at the interaction between Ryner and the man in surprise... In a moment, he narrowed his eyes. The girl was covered with wounds. Arms, legs, face...

The girl had brown hair and a cute face. Her body seemed frail and fragile, but it could be seen that she was a cute girl.

And, she was injured...

“... What is your reason, that you have to hit such a small child?”

But the man replied:

“It’s none of your business! If you continue to be such a busybody, we’ll settle you too! You know, we, we had to suffer from what kind of treatment because of her... wa?!”

Then, the man stopped.

Ryner twisted the man’s arm, saying:

“Oh dear me, is it painful? I’m so sorry. And, I don’t know about the treatment that you suffered because of this child, but...”

Ryner’s voice turned slightly dark and soft.

“... But, I believe, the wounds on that child’s face is greater than your arm. I’ll ask you again, so answer me obediently. Why do you hit this child? Ah, I might as well tell you... if your reason is not enough, I might accidentally break your arm...”

The man hearing this, glared at Ryner violently.

“Don’t speak nonsense! What do you understand!! Hey, what are you doing! Think of something to stop the mouth of this stranger!”

He shouted to the other men, but...

“ ...”

No one replied.

“Hey, what is it?! I told you to beat up this guy!”

“ ...”

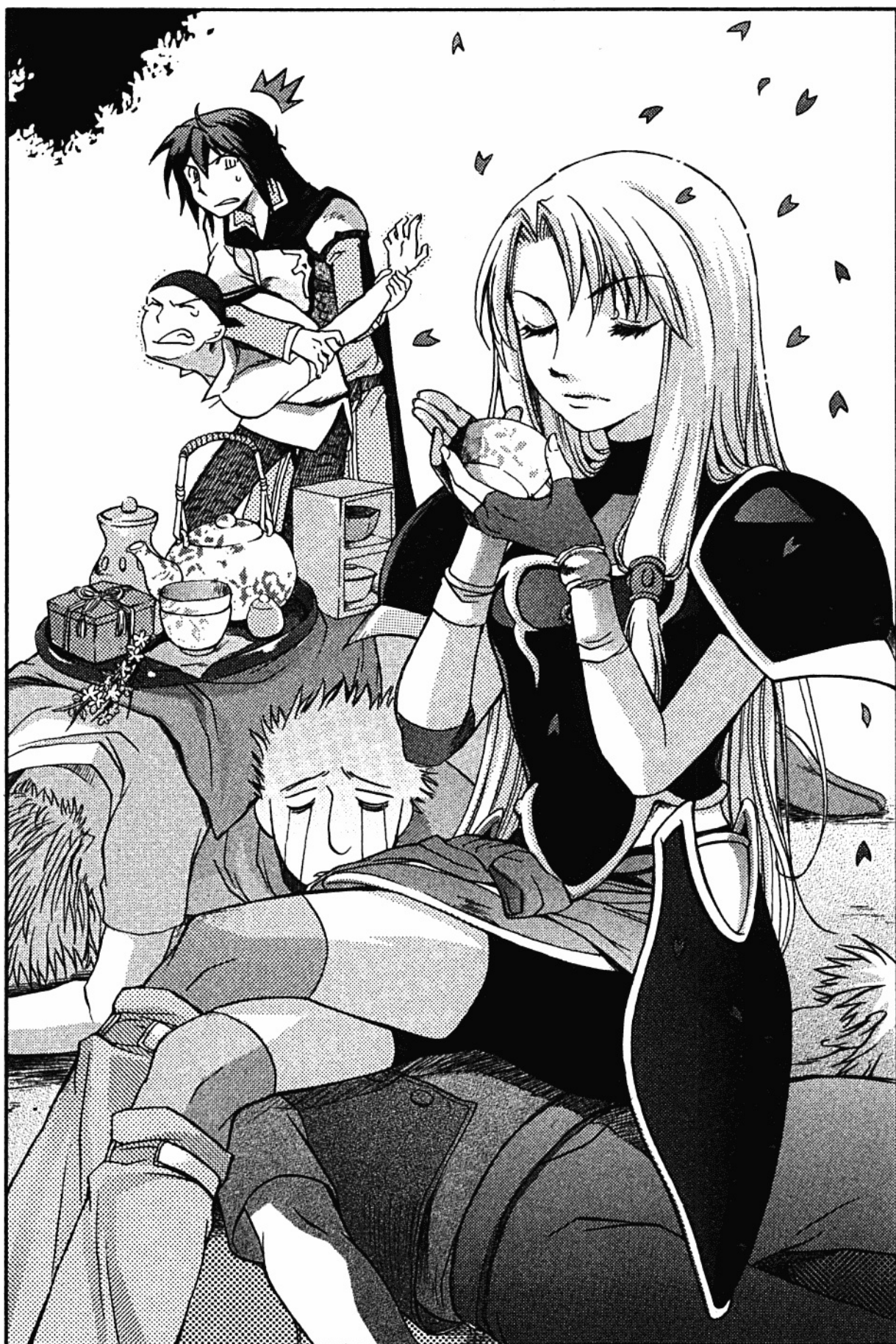
“Hey, hey... I say you...”

Ryner grabbed the man’s arm, allowing him to turn around.

“Ah~ The companions you speak of... are they the ones sleeping over there?”

There was only a pile of men collapsed on the ground...

And Ferris sat on the men, taking out her favorite tea set that had been prepared unknowingly, resting leisurely...



“ ... ”

Ryner looked at this half-liddedly.

“...I say, what are you doing?”

Ryner hearing this, simply answered:

“Eh? Do you want to drink it? But, regretfully, the dangos are not in stock.”

“...I’m not talking about that...”

Ryner seemed to groan. Then, he looked at the man again.

“Wu, forget it... it’s like this, because of this person, the situation is like that... Your companions have become the tables for the tea set, so they can’t come and help you... Will you answer my questions obediently now? – Why do you hit this child? And, what is wrong with this village? It seems a little strange?... You were talking about a demon’s curse.”

The man hearing that, suddenly started trembling.

“N, no?! I, I can’t... I, I will be killed...”

Ryner hearing this, frowned.

“Ah, here it comes again. Why are you so scared?”

“Can’t, can’t say. If I say it... I will be killed...”

At this moment, Ryner karate chopped the back of the man’s neck, the man stopped speaking, losing consciousness, collapsing on the ground.

Ryner looked back at Ferris.

“It’s like that, there seems to be no way to interrogate these people.”

Ferris replied:

“No problem. It’s just as predicted.”

Ryner spoke too:

“Yes. Then...”

This time he turned back again, looking at the girl who was on the ground, looking at him with a surprised expression...

The girl's line of vision met with Ryner's, revealing a slightly timid expression.

"...Wu, that... thank, thank you for rescuing me."

Ferris hearing that, poked her head out from behind Ryner and said:

"Yes. We didn't rescue you for free. If you want to repay us, you'll have to give something?"

Ryner shrugged.

"Having it said like that, I seem to have become a card, how annoying..."

The girl revealed an even more timid expression.

"Th, that... I also thought... to express my gratitude, but... my family is poor, so we have no money..."

Ryner hearing this, shook his head frantically.

"Ah, no no. We don't need you to give us money or anything... we just came to this country... it's a little troublesome, we weren't able to find anywhere to stay for the moment. So, if it's convenient, could we stay at your house... how do I say this? As long as the sky darkens, I feel like sleeping..."

"Eh... Th, then... you aren't Runa people?"

Ferris nodded.

"Yes. We are traveling to all the countries because of various reasons. If we could stay at your house temporarily, we would also pay you..."

But the girl interrupted Ferris's words.

"Please, please save him?!"

She suddenly cried, tightly grabbing Ryner's leg...

"My, my childhood friend... is about to be killed... s, so, please save him?!"

Ryner hearing this.

"Why did something like this suddenly happen? Does it have anything to do with the demon's curse?"

The girl shook her head vigorously.

“No! Arua, Arua he... is not a demon! But, he was brought into the mountains by the Runa soldiers... if we don't save him, he will... definitely be killed...”

Saying that, the girl started crying.

Ryner hearing that, revealed a distressed expression.

“Ah, wa, wait, when did this happen? You said, your childhood friend... is called Arua? Taken away by the Runa soldiers? And the reason for them taking him away is because Arua is a demon...”

Then—

“I told you Arua is not a demon!!”

The girl shouted, then started to wail.

Ryner scratched his head in distress... then said:

“Wu... so, Arua is not a demon, but he was called a demon, and was taken away by the Runa soldiers... is that it?”

“Yes.”

By saying that he finally gained the girl's confirmation, Ryner sighed in relief, then asked:

“But, why is that person called Arua called a demon? Can you tell us in detail?”

So the girl said:

“Eh, that...”

At this moment Ferris interrupted her.

“Wait. Let's change our location? If we talk here, it's not good for the wounds on that child?”

Ryner hearing that, revealed a surprised expression.

“Ah, that's right. Wu, this is the first time I'm seeing Ferris being concerned for others. I didn't think you would have your strong points.”

Ferris nodded as if it were expected.

“Yes. I'm worried that she will die halfway through her explanation, that

would be troubling.”

Ryner hearing that...

“...If you didn’t say that then it would have been fine... never mind, so it’s like that... then, is it fine if we go to your house?”

Ryner asked, the girl said:

“That, big brother is looking for a place to stay, right? I know of a good place! Follow me!”

Saying that, the girl ran ahead...

“Ah, hey... you don’t have to run... ah, really... how troublesome...”

“Uh.”

So, Ryner and Ferris chased after her...

Like that, the trio left the men lying on the ground, leaving the area.

The girl brought them to a house.

It was a house that was made of wood and it was not very big.

About the interior, it could not be said to be very clean.

Even—

“Wa... what is this...”

Ryner looked at the interior... he couldn’t help but exclaim.

The room could be said to be devastated.

The table was flipped over, the book shelves were toppled over, the cutleries were shattered, all on the ground...

A tornado seemed to have swept through the house...

The girl revealed a sad expression.

“...Two days ago it was still neat and organized...”

“Two days ago? That means, this is your house?”

“...Yes. This is the place where Arua stayed before he was taken away. I think, if Arua came back to see that the house was so dirty, he would be upset. But every time I clean it, everyone would mess up the house again... Ah, I’m really embarrassed. I’ll start to clean up now, you, you can wait for a while! As the current messy state there is no space for sleeping, right...”

The girl said, starting to clean up the house...

Ryner seeing that said:

“Ah, it’s fine it’s fine. We’re only staying for one night, there’s no problem.”

He quickly moved the chairs and table to the middle of the room, sitting on a chair and said:

“On the other hand, can you explain the situation? What has happened? The house has been messed up... you being hit by a group of adults... and the reactions of the villagers... what has happened here? And...”

Ryner looked at the girl’s face, continuing:

“And, I haven’t asked for your name. Ah, I might as well tell you, I’m called Ryner. And this emotionless person is called Ferris.”

The girl politely said:

“That, that, I’m called Kuku, Ryner-sama, Ferris-sama, please look after me.”

She bowed her head deeply.

“Yes, me too.”

“Yes. Then, the self-introductions are over, can you start to tell us now?”

“Yes.”

So Kuku started to narrate the events.

She raised her face to look at the ceiling as if she were thinking about something, then said:

“I am Arua's neighbor . Our relationship has always been good. My parents are on good terms with Arua’s parents... Every day, every day I would play with Arua. We were on good terms with the villagers... Our lives were normal, it was a good place...”

She thought back as she spoke slowly. When she spoke of Arua, Kuku's face had a happy and lonely expression.

Anyway, the Rajit village she spoke of, was originally a calm and beautiful village...

But, currently this village did not resemble those times. It felt as if it had become darker, sinister and mad, it couldn't help but make one doubt that she was speaking nonsense.

But...

Ryner...

"..."

He understood this atmosphere.

The atmosphere where people were suspicious, fearful, angry and despairing as they lived...

"Then why did it turn to this?"

Ryner asked, the girl's face immediately clouded over.

"This village has changed... from that day. The village's taxes were suddenly raised... in the past, it wasn't easy to get by, but after the taxes were raised, no one was able to deal with it... but everyone didn't dare to go against the royal family's edict... so everyone grit their teeth and paid the taxes. Everyone worked hard... they didn't even eat. My parents didn't even have food to eat, but every day, every day they worked until night... They were so hard working? They didn't even relax? But, in the end our family couldn't pay the taxes. We couldn't pay the taxes... so the royal family immediately... the lord governing this land came..."

Ryner could see, the expression on Kuku's face, was becoming tense slowly because of fear.

She used a trembling voice to say:

"He bought a large army. It was only our family who couldn't pay the taxes, but he bought many, many soldiers... In the beginning my father was killed. In front of the villagers... it was only a moment. My father's upper body

disappeared because of magic... there was a lot of blood.

“At the moment I saw that, my mind went blank...”

She cried. The tears welled out from her eyes...

What she had often seen.

It was common, but it was a story that was hard to bear.

The past Roland...

The Roland before Sion sat on the throne, these matters were common.

The nobles had greedily wished for entertainment and bullied the people, madly killing the people...

And the target of the mad nobles was Arua?

This boy was a demon, so he had to be killed.

Since the nobles had said that, then this boy was definitely a demon. The words of the nobles were absolute. Daring rebels, would be killed. No, if it was only killed it was better. Before the victim died he would bear anguishing pain, facing humiliation, then he'd killed in the end.

This country was like that.

A country that had allied with Roland in the past...

A corrupted country, coupled with corrupted nobles...

It was said that this country's magic was used with the power from god.

Borrowing god's—power.

They used this power, to kill this girl's father.

They used this power, to take the lives of people.

What kind of beautiful god was it?

“...How disgusting.”

Ryner softly muttered with a voice that was unheard.

Mad nobles governing a mad country.

The girl continued speaking. Her tears continued to flow...

“But, even so, things didn’t end there. I was caught next... I saw my mother crying uncontrollably. But the lord laughed. He saw my father die, he saw my mother crying... but he laughed. I don’t know what was so funny. He kept laughing, kept laughing, he said, kill that kid too, he said it would be a warning to other... the magic was right in front of me...”

The ending was undescrivable.

But...

The girl seemed to recollect the scene then, speaking slowly:

“But, at this moment... something unbelievable happened. Arua... Arua... used magic... in the past Arua never said that he could use magic... But, at that moment Arua was as if a different person... everyone seemed to know that. Because, everyone looking at Arua, revealed a scared expression... a strange design appeared in Arua’s eyes...”

In a moment.

With a bang, the table in front of Ryner bounced up. No, it was Ryner who had jumped up.

What did this girl say?

A design had appeared in Arua’s eyes...

Kuku seeing that, stared at Ryner...

“Ah, that, I, I said something I was not allowed to...”

“Eh? Ah, no, no that’s not it...”

At this moment Ferris interrupted:

“Kuku, don’t worry, this fellow will do this sometimes, doing some strange things. Continue speaking.”

She said that to Kuku.

Ryner frantically said:

“Yes, yes. It’s like that. Perhaps it’s because I’m tired lately? My arm seems to

be slightly twisted... It's because my arm didn't listen to me, it knocked the table. I interrupted you, I'm sorry. Please continue..."

Although Ryner said that, but he could feel his face tensing.

How could it be...

Hearing this kind of matters in this kind of place...

Because Ryner persuaded her to continue, Kuku nodded.

"Yes, just now I had stopped... After that, the lord was very scared of Arua, he returned... it was Arua who saved me. But... mother warned me not to speak to Arua. The villagers said Arua was a demon who had killed many people, they started to avoid him... After a while, the lord came again, this time, he brought more soldiers than the previous time, he took away Arua. He said he would do research on the demon in the mountains. He said that the Runa army commanded him to research on the demon, allowing to have his achievements. He laughed again. After that, the taxes in the village were raised again... it was harder to live..."

Saying that, she revealed a sad expression.

"In the beginning, there were people who wanted to escape. But, they were all killed. The lord ordered the villagers not to leave the village because he did not want the secret of the research on Arua to be leaked out. Not only that, if this matter was spread to the people visiting the village, they would be killed. Many people were killed, the taxes continued to rise... Everyone's minds became a little strange. Everyone started to push the blame to Arua..."

Ryner hearing that, narrowed his eyes.

"So, you were hit?"

"...Yes. But, I'm fine. Because, if it were not for Arua saving me, I would be dead. But, Arua and... Arua's parents... because they saved me..."

Ryner hearing that, looked around the room.

Arua's parents seemed to have been taken away.

Ryner was clearer than anyone... what kind of experiment they were carrying out in the mountains.

The strange design in the boy's eyes.

Suddenly using magic that he should not have known of.

The events happening on that boy's body...

Previously the Roland government had carried out various experiments on Ryner's body, awakened in his mind...

Ryner asked Kuku:

"I want to ask you, how long has it been since Arua was taken away?"

Kuku answered:

"Eh? That... more or less eight days..."

"Then, how long has it been since Arua's parents were taken away?"

"Around five days ago."

"..."

Ryner hearing that, frowned.

It was too late. It had been too long since then.

Even if he rushed over now...

But, Ferris stood up.

"Alright, then, let's go?"

Ryner hearing that, looked at her.

"But..."

And, Ferris used a steady expression to look at Ryner's face, then said:

"There's no more time, right?"

"Eh... Ah, yes. That's right, if we don't hurry, it'll be too late."

"Then go! We have to protect that boy. It's like that, Kuku. You'll wait here. We'll bring person called Arua back."

Kuku hearing that, revealed a disbelieving expression.

"You're willing, willing to help me? The other party is the nobles?"

But, Ferris answered simply:

“Runa nobles do not concern us.”

“But, but, they have Runa soldiers...”

“No problem. If there is something up, I’ll use this foolish man as bait, and escape myself.”

She actually said that.

“Hey, why do you treat me as bait!”

Ryner couldn’t help but yell at Ferris as usual. Ferris replied:

“Yes. Looking at you, there should be no problems.”

“Eh? You...”

“Then let’s go.”

Saying that, Ferris walked out of the room, Ryner seeing that said:

“Ah? I say, you say let’s go, but do you know where the mountain is?”

He asked as he chased after her. Ferris pointed at the northern mountains:

“When we came to this village, I saw a light there. It should be there right?”

It was night time now, but in the deep mountains, there was a flickering light where Ferris had pointed...

Ryner seeing that.

“Ah, can’t be mistaken, thats the place...”

At this moment Kuku said too:

“That’s right. It’s there. Arua is there...”

She said, Ryner hearing that, seemed to be depressed.

“Wu, the position of the light seems to be quite high? If we climb up now, it’s going to be troublesome.”

He said as he walked forward...

Ferris said:

“Yes. Walking on a mountain path with a pervert, it’s really a suicidal action.”

“Who are you calling a pervert!”

“Of course it’s you.”

The two spoke, walking towards the mountains.

Kuku seeing this.

“Ah, that, me too...”

But, Ryner turned around and spoke to her:

“Ah, it’s not a problem. If it’s the two of us we can save him, Kuku. Why don’t you clean the house for us? Ne, if Arua comes back, and sees that the house is dirty, he’ll be upset right?”

Kuku hearing that, nodded vigorously.

“That’s right! Then let me do the cleaning! Big brother you have to do your best!”

“Oh.”

Ryner waved, then continued to walk up the mountain.

But.

Ryner’s expression at that moment...

“...”

In the darkness, several lights moved.

The mountain where the boy called a demon was imprisoned.

Ryner and Ferris walked towards the mountain, and began to scale the mountain in the dead of the night.

Changing locations, Roland castle.

Late at night.

When Sion had not slept for more than thirty hours, and was starting to get sleepy, the missive suddenly came.

There was a frantic knocking on his door.

“Your Majesty, Your Majesty! It’s not good!”

Sion hearing that, opened his eyes slightly, saying to the door:

“What is it? What is the problem?”

He said with a slightly tired voice. He had been woken when he was about to fall asleep, he felt his head start to ache.

This time there was a voice.

“Please get out of bed, Your Majesty! There is an urgent matter.”

The person who was shouting at the door, seemed to be Eslina. Her tone was quite urgent... When Sion heard her voice, his eyes opened. Eslina had received Calne’s orders, she seemed to always watch Sion, frightened that he would over work. Today after she and Calne had ate together, they saw that Sion had not rested, they were angry and they persuaded him, with much difficulty they managed to get Sion to bed.

Now, they were calling him up when Sion had not closed his eyes completely, that meant...

Sion raised his body up, arranging the front of his slightly loose shirt as he said:

“Please wait. I’ll come out now. What has happened?”

“It’s like this...”

At this moment, Calne’s voice spoke from beyond the door.

“Clagh senpai?! I told you now? Doctor! Let the doctor look at you first?!”

“You’re noisy! Let me see Sion first. What can this kind of wound count for...”

“Of course it matters! If it were me, I would have fainted and died?”

“That’s because you aren’t me!”

“I’m talking about common sense! It’s really enough, Eslina, Noa-sama, say something...”

This conversation took place outside the door...

This moment, the door was not knocked on, it was opened...

Claugh's chest and arm were bleeding, behind him was Noa whose hair was stained with blood.

Sion narrowed his eyes. Then said:

"Calne, Eslina, call the doctor over, even if you talk a lot, Claugh most likely wouldn't listen, let him receive treatment here."

Calne and Eslina received the order, chorusing: "Yes."

Saying that they ran off quickly, Sion confirmed that they had left, then looked at Claugh again.

Then...

"You have protected Noa-sama well. As the king, I thank you, Claugh."

Claugh hearing that, used his sharp eyes to stare at Sion.

"How did you know that Noa would be attacked? Unless, you already knew that this would happen..."

But Sion shook his head.

"Noa-sama is covered with blood, and, you are injured, rushing into my room with a furious expression... From that, the only answer is this one right? You fought with someone outside, injuring yourself, so you came to find me?"

"Ah? How can that be?"

"So, it should be Noa-sama who was attacked... Am I right?"

Noa hearing that.

"Your Majesty has deep insight... I admire you."

But, Sion shook his head, then frowned slightly.

"...It's not insight... When you say that, I really don't have a stand. I could predict that this would happen, but... I'm very sorry. I was too careless."

Saying that, Sion turned to Claugh.

"I cannot explain myself to you too, you've helped a lot."

Claugh hearing that, revealed an even more enraged expression.

“Ah? Could be predicted? What does that mean? Then, you knew who was the one who sent the assassins?”

Sion couldn't get the chance to answer when Noa had answered:

“At the moment the only people who can benefit from killing me are only them, Klom.”

Claugh hearing that, turned to Noa.

“Them? The ‘them’ you’re talking about... the nobles?”

Noa nodded with a grave expression.

“If they kill me, a conflict would occur between Estabul and Roland that have been joined together with much difficulty.”

Sion said:

“At the present, the Estabul people had a great amount of trust in Noa-sama. Many Roland people respect your spirit too. If something happens to you, it probably would not stir up something as trivial as a conflict between two countries right? If you die now, the rebellion from Estabul would not be something unavoidable. And a meaningless conflict would weaken the country, the feelings of dissatisfaction would be towards me who was supposed to protect you. Their current methods will not benefit the country. So that I will be pulled off stage, to satisfy their personal pleasures, they will do anything.”

Claugh hearing that, revealed an anxious expression.

“What does that mean? For that, they will let Noa receive this kind of treatment...”

Sion lowered the head towards the two of them.

“But, this time's matter is my fault. This was clearly something that could have been prevented, I just didn't think that the nobles would move that quickly... It was an error in my judgment. I'm sorry.”

But Clough said:

“It's nothing too serious. No one is blaming you, Sion. You always have to

think about things that would take a few people to handle, your hard work is witnessed by many people. The ones who should take responsibility are those nobles. Noa escaped by luck this time. But, what about after today? The villains are all coming, are we going to continue to keep silent all the while..."

But, Noa said:

"No, I think that it is ill-advised for His Majesty to take action against the nobles now."

"Noa, what are you saying? They have treated you like this..."

But, Noa shook her head decisively.

"It doesn't matter if it is me. I'm fine. What is important, is that more effort should be put into maintaining the stability of the country's political situation. With the matters of the country taking precedence, we cannot fall into the trap of those lowly people, increasing the size of the problem just for protecting me."

"But..."

Noa interrupted Claugh who was still clinging on to the issue, smiling warmly.

"Furthermore... in the most urgent moment, Major-General Klom will protect me like this time. The protection of the Crimson Fingered Claugh Klom, makes many people feel reassured? Or, does Major-General Klom have no confidence in protecting me from the bullying of those villains?"

"Ah, no, urgh..."

Claugh frowned, looking at Sion with an unhappy expression.

"Ah, really, Sion you should say something!"

Sion shrugged, then looked at Noa.

"Thank you for your understanding. But, towards this matter, I am unable to immediately make a decision. Of course, I will try to think of the best method so as not to disappoint you... Ne, it's late, I will send someone to help you prepare a room in the castle, and someone to prepare hot water. Rest well."

Noa bowed her head respectfully to express her gratitude.

“Thank you for your kindness, Your Majesty.”

Following that, Sion looked at Claugh.

“With that, you should go down too. I will prepare a room by her room, and let you protect her... but, you should go and deal with your injuries first.”

Claugh hearing that, frowned again.

“I said that these injuries aren’t fatal...”

“Claugh!”

“Ah, really, you’re so naggy. I’ll go and treat my injuries, is that fine? Really... don’t be so angry.”

But Sion shook his head.

“I’m not angry. I only hope that you can understand. She is one of the people who definitely cannot meet any danger presently in our country.”

“...Even if I am a clumsy person I know that...”

Sion interrupted Claugh.

“But, if you forget that you are also a very important person of this country, I will be very troubled. If you weren’t here, my path to repressing the tyranny would be delayed. Not only that... if you died...”

Sion paused, smiling. That was a smile that was a little sheepish, but it was filled with confidence.

It was a smile that would attract everyone’s attention and charismatic.

Sion looked at Claugh.

“If you die, I will cry? You had better not make me cry.”

“You...”

When Claugh heard this, he revealed a stunned expression...

At this moment.

“Ah, Your Majesty Sion! I have brought the doctor. It’s already late at night, no one was willing to wake up... but, I specially went to wake him up, so, Claugh senpai, you have to obediently receive treatment!!”

Sion hearing that, waved his head, as if chasing away the people...

Claugh turned around with an unhappy expression again and said:

“Ah, it can’t be helped. My friend is having difficulties sleeping alone in the middle of the night, he’s so stubborn, I think I should just trouble myself, accept the treatment?”

Sion laughed when he heard this.

“Nonsense. Ne, I had the rare chance to sleep properly, but I was woken up by you, I want to sleep now. Scat now.”

The surrounding people exchanged words in this way.

For some reason, Noa was looking at this scene happily...

Then everyone left the room.

It was silent...

Sion slowly went back to his bed.

He tried to think about the things after today, but felt that his headache grew worse.

Assassinating Noa...

The nobles had moved first again...

First was Fiole.

Fiole was killed, as a warning to Sion...

And this time it was Noa.

But, the riskiness this time could not be compared to the time with Fiole. If they moved wrongly, judgement would be unavoidable. But, the nobles tried to kill Noa no matter what.

So that they could achieve their goal, they did not care about anything else.

“.....Damn.”

Sion muttered as if groaning.

This time Noa was luckily rescued by Clough. If Clough was not able to protect

Noa... even if it didn't cause a direct impact, but maybe everything would have ended. At least, the internal situation of unifying the country would have stepped back... this way, perhaps there would be no chance to fortify the country against the invasion?

This time Clough had saved everything.

But next time?

What would happen next time?

He couldn't always stay in a dangerous situation... exposing the people to harm.

He had to think, think of some plan that would do...

As for a plan...

At this moment...

Sion raised his head, carrying a mocking smile on his face.

".....You really appear at the most opportune times..."

So, a black shadow slowly appeared in front of Sion...

Froaude.

Froaude replied:

"If I can meet Your Majesty's expectations, then it would be a great honour."

Saying that, he bowed his head.

Sion said to him:

"You don't have to be so polite... and, I know what you are thinking."

Froaude revealed a shallow smile.

"Everything has been prepared, Your Majesty. We didn't have to move out, the other side has already started moving. What kind of choices does Your Majesty wish for after today?"

"..... The path you pointed out to me?"

"I have mentioned it before—welcoming the nobles. At the present the life of

Noa Ehn-sama is being threatened... but, Your Majesty holds no unhappiness to the nobles, and you don't chase after the issue. You have to present an image that you accept the nobles, and are willing to rule this country with the nobles. Let them suck up the honey, sate their appetites, at that moment cut down the nobles who have lowered their guard, wouldn't that be easy?"

Sion hearing that, revealed an empty expression.

"Killing them without leaving anything behind?"

"If there is a need."

"I said it before, the people..."

"..."

But, Froaude did not reply.

"I have acted according to your orders, everything has been prepared fully."

He only said that... Sion narrowed his eyes when he heard that.

"Unless... the one who sent the attackers after Noa-sama was you..."

But, Froaude shook his head.

"Regrettably, that was not my doing. The instigation of the nobles to attack Noa-sama... creating the current situation. This is only a tactic to target the scheming. If I sent out assassins, there would be no need to worry about Noa-sama's life... but, this matter was not my doing."

".....Is that so? You can go down."

"Yes. Then I'll retreat now. It will probably be more busy after today. Please rest well, Your Majesty."

Saying that, Froaude left the room.

But, after he left, Sion still lay on the bed not speaking, in the end, that night, he was unable to sleep at all.

The next morning.

Roland entered a state of confusion that had never been seen before.

The king was announcing to everyone in the country.

Just by looking at the current situation, the contents of the order made people confused...

The places of the Sion's subordinates, and the nobles who trusted and chased after Sion were raised greatly.

And the one who was raised to the highest position was...

The person who was promoted from Major-General to Field Marshal... that was Claugh klom who was promoted to the highest position in the army.

The people who carried the anti-king flag, almost all the current nobles were crowded out, assuming important positions...

Some people celebrated, some were jealous, some felt annoyed, some felt troubled by the sudden changes in the surroundings.

Other from the large alterations in human resources, because of the overlapping that caused some jobs to be joined, this also caused Roland to enter a state of extreme confusion.

So...

In the hall of the king. Many people were gathered here.

Claugh came too of course, but when he appeared...

"...What is this, Sion! I can't accept this! Even if you didn't graciously let me have this achievement, just by my abilities, I would have quickly ascended to the general position. But you..."

He shouted angrily at Sion.

Calne followed up:

"That's right, Your Majesty Sion! Having this happen suddenly, it would be strange if it didn't shock us. Even if you were considering something, you should have told us first..."

Noa also raised her disagreement.

“As of the current situation the country is in, shouldn’t you think more when choosing these measures? I know I sound rude, and... This way, it’s not only the nobles, probably even the people will suspect that you have finally revealed yourself as a tyrant. I can understand that Your Majesty wants to pass the matters, the feeling of allowing your trusted people to handle these matters, but... the nobles hold a large amount of authority. If you ignore the reality and make this choice... it will cause troubles. If something goes wrong in the process of spreading the order, I think it would be prudent to retract the command.”

Her expression was very serious. Yesterday she had clearly said, the affair that she was nearly assassinated was not known by the public, it would be advisable to lay low, but now her expression said that she was unable to accept this matter.

And there was Eslina, Froaude and Lord Gnule who had stood with Sion since the beginning, and other nobles who supported the king who were assembled here...

Sion shrugged.

“How troublesome. Everyone has become successful, but there are many who are unsatisfied, you lot have little ambition.”

Lord Gnule who was aptly described as a warm and honest and sincere knight, his face stiffened when he heard that.

“Why does Your Majesty say that? Do you really think that we are following you for success? The people who follow you... no, at least the people assembled you are ones who treat fame as dirt. They are people who really think well for the country, they don’t wish to see the country continue to be shrouded in darkness like before. And, this order for the human resources... it gives people a feeling of being betrayed. This way, Your Majesty is announcing to the people—let go and gain authority! Please, Your Majesty, retract the order...”

At this moment Froaude interrupted:

“No, it’s already too late. The nobles in the anti-king faction, will have definitely used His Majesty’s actions to purposely buy horses and welcome soldiers, attempting to trigger a conflict. If they move, even if the order is retracted, it would be impossible to stop it...”

Everyone in the hall momentarily went silent.

Yes.

It had already began.

The battle to gain the control of this country...

It was happening as if too quickly.

The rebellion movement in Estabul, it had only ended not long ago. Even if that was only a façade of temporary peace, it should have last longer?

Everyone had a 'is the king mad?' expression.

And...

After Sion breathed in deeply, he looked around the hall slowly. There were quite a lot of people, if these people were Sion's... no, if they looked out for this country... if they really thought for the safety of this country, not only working hard for the country because of his or her personal gains...

This battle could possibly be won.

Sion breathed in again.

Then said:

"I understand everyone's thoughts. But, will everyone listen to my thoughts?"

Everyone focused their attention on Sion. When Sion confirmed that everyone was listening to him—

"Many people are surprised by my plan, right? I knew that everyone would be surprised. Perhaps many of you would think, this kind of change in the human resources is too sudden... the timing is not right... this change easily attracts the rebound of the nobles who remain from the old system... but, before everyone expresses their unhappiness, please listen to me. Does everyone know of the country Gastark?"

Most of the people in the hall tilted their heads in suspicion.

But, Sion continued:

“Then, does everyone know of the country Stohl? In the Menoris Continent, it is the only big country. That has five times our military and national power. I want to ask everyone, if Stohl invaded Roland, what kind of situation would it be then?”

Gnule answered:

“...Urgh, of course we would be unable to win. We would be wiped out. But, talking about it, we and Stohl... just by the geographic location of that country and Roland, wouldn't it be too far? The chances of Stohl's invasion reaching here...”

Sion nodded.

“I think that there is no possibility too. Yes, Stohl probably would not invade here? So we don't need to worry.”

When he said that, Gnule frowned.

“I'm sorry, Your Majesty. As of the current state I still do not understand your meaning... Stohl would not invade here, so, we do not need to worry, I understand that. But what has that got to do with the order you gave out?”

Sion replied:

“Yes, there is a connection. Stohl may not invade us, but... according to the information I received today morning... two thirds of Stohl's territory has been occupied by the country called Gastark.”

“Ah?!”

The atmosphere in the hall changed.

Sion continued:

“Not only that. Like the original impression everyone had, Gastark was a small country in the extreme north that was unknown. But, now their strength has increased. Not only Stohl, if it includes the small countries, they have already swallowed up many countries... Honestly speaking... it's unknown as of now. Ah, after all they are far from us...”

Gnule hearing that, seemingly to comfort himself he said:

“B, but, it is a distant country after all. There are many countries like Runa and Nelpha between Roland and Gastark. Other than that, there are four big countries that almost have the magnitude of power that Stohl had. It should be hard... for them to invade here...”

But, Sion shook his head.

“Gastark may not reach here. But, so as to defend against Gastark, the other countries may expand their lands, national power and military power, and start to invade each other, isn’t that true?”

“Th, that...”

“At the present there are reports showing that, there are people that do not belong to Nelpha who are within the Imperial Nelpha borders, secretly moving. And... even our allied country Runa...”

“...”

No one dared to speak.

The world was changing.

Everyone felt it. The huge war that had not occurred yet, there was a feeling of premonition that it was about to happen...

That was no longer those kind of small-scale military competitions between Roland and Estabul.

It was wiping out other countries, or else they would be wiped out themselves...

When everyone in the hall understood this, Sion continued:

“...We don’t have the time anymore. We don’t have the time to leisurely continue the ugly internal conflicts in our country. So, Froaude had a solution. This solutions was: set a trap, allowing the protesting nobles to gather together, then purge them at one go.”

Everyone looked at Froaude...

Claugh glared at Froaude viciously again and said:

“Purge? Even if it is adults or children, all are to be purged? This kind of action

is no different from the previous evil king...”

But Sion interrupted him.

“No, Claugh. Froaude’s solution is not wrong. I think too, that is a viable option.

“But—I am the king of this country. I am the king of the people living in this country. Even if it is the nobles who wish to kill me, they are the people of Roland too. Even so, I think that they should be protected too. I want to save them, even if it may not be many people. I wish that under the situation where there is no violence, to unify this country. So, I would pick this intense measure.

“I want to use this opportunity, to completely wield the authority over Roland.

“If the nobles are willing to follow me, I will not pick over their past offences, accepting them.

“But, if they wish to rebel till the end, I will purge them. Perhaps another battle will be raised over this.

“But, there is no more time.

“So that I can rescue most of the citizens in this country, probably I will need many people to sacrifice themselves.

“Even so, I still want everyone’s help. I need the help of the people who are thinking for the country, if everyone was not here, I would not be able to continue.

“We cannot let this country be destroyed.

“Will you be willing to save this country with me?”

He said that.

He said all of that.

So that this country would be unified quickly, even if his companions increased it would not be too many.

There was no more time. If the power of those nearest to him were unable to come together...

Everything would end...

At this moment, Clough put his hand over his chest, bowing his head and said:

“I will endeavor to comply to my liege’s orders.”

Following that, Gnule, the nobles... all of them bowed their head, chorusing:

“I will endeavor to comply to my liege’s orders.”

Sion seeing this, narrowed his eyes.

The battle was about to begin.

Not only the internal war in Roland.

Roland was taking the first step to fight against the world...

The atmosphere in the hall rose slowly. Everyone was intoxicated with the charisma of this king.

Froaude left the hall alone, softly saying:

“It’s really... my king. The actions that a king should have, he has performed them perfectly. Wishing to help more people, even if it is only a small portion... is that it? This is a perfect king...”

A shallow trace of a smile appeared on his face.

Yes.

Even if the sacrifices that would cause would be more than the trap that I set for the nobles to jump into and purge them...

The king needs to progress on a tyrannical path.

Even if he has to step over many mountains of corpses to proceed...

A king needs to progress on a tyrannical path.

So, I will follow you.

I will follow a perfect king, although it causes heart ache, it is destined that you will take away the lives of many people...

Has His Majesty discovered his helplessly?

No, he has already helplessly discovered it, but he did not think much of it.

Is that pattern that a king goes through...?

And you are troubled over this.

Even so, I have to lessen your troubles, even if it is only a drop in a bucket...

That is my duty.

To sacrifice the least to gain a large effect...

All of the blood stained duties should be settled by me...

Froaude walked to the entrance of the hall, then turned back.

The interior of the hall was glowing.

Froaude narrowed his eyes, looking at this scene.

Then, he put his hand on his chest, bowing his head.

“I will endeavor to comply to my liege’s orders.”

He said in a low voice, then his shadow vanished from the hall.

The darkness moved.

Froaude had started two plans.

One was to the powerful nobles. He sent out assassins, to the quarters of those who had not shown that they were supporting the king or not, or the people who were in the anti-king faction.

If they were inclined to the anti-king faction, or the more intense anti-king faction, then they would protest even more? At that time it would be inevitable that they would be killed.

If they were slightly inclined to supporting the king or neutral, then they would not be dealt with. They would be eventually swallowed by the large power of the king right?

In this way, the nobles who should be killed and the nobles who would

survive, could be clearly differentiated this way.

And the second plan was...



Chapter 3: The same Hero King

This was a building that had black walls and was filled with an intimidating aura.

The military section of the Roland Empire, the official residence of the Taboo Breakers Pursuit Squad.

Rahel Miller sat in a room with no decorations, looking at the files that his subordinates had sent him.

“...Urgh.”

A wrinkle appeared between his eye brows.

He had a face with deep contour lines and a strong muscular body.

He had his usual sour expression, making him emanate a sternness that a thirty year old man should not have.

No, it wasn't only his appearance that was stern. At the same time Miller had results and abilities to be proud of.

He always completed his missions with a firm determination, and he also knew how to reveal soft methods, in different situations.

An amazing ability like this, had appeared from an orphan who had no one to fall back on...

And it had allowed a young man like him to raise to the position of the Major General quickly.

According to the normal standards, this was an outstanding event that could not have been arranged. No, other than the nobles, for someone of his birth to raise to the higher ranks, was near impossible.

But then, no one had expressed displeasure at the fact that Miller had been promoted to Major General.

In the era of the previous king...

Even in the mad era where the authority was held by the nobles, no one had uttered a word of resentment to Miller becoming a Major General.

Perhaps it was because his character and ability was so excellent, that it stemmed all of the protests. Even among those who had just entered the military, the young nobles, there were some who had held him in high regard, and admired him greatly.

Even so, that was not the most important reason.

The real reason laid with...

The profession that Miller willingly took up.

The duty of the pursuit of the Taboo Breakers.

So that the secrets of the country's magic would not be leaked out, when the people who had learnt Roland's magic escaped death or smuggled out of the country, this squad would set out to pursue, capture, and even prosecute them.

Among the squads in the Roland army, this squad should be counted as an important part.

Because, once the sequence and structure of Roland's magic were leaked to other countries, it would be equal to exposing Roland Empire's weakness. It would be the same as giving those countries a chance to attack Roland.

Providing this opportunity... it was equal to the possibility of creating an explosive war.

So, logically, this department should be in a position to decide the fate of Roland, it should be an extremely important department.

But, the nobles were supporting the idea of disbanding the squad.

The reason was simple.

Because this squad was a job that had a high level of actual battle experience, even though there was no war.

And the missions that were a long way away from Roland, where they could not receive reinforcements, were very dangerous.

So the nobles did not like this job.

So the nobles wanted to push this job, to orphans who did not care about life or death, or the normal citizens. Then mock them, saying that this was a squad were inhuman, lowly watchdogs assembled.

Under this situation, Miller who was an orphan became the most responsible person in the group, and seemed not to attract the nobles' interest.

Of course Miller could not be called the most responsible person without a title, so, he had been given the position of the Major General.

He had already instilled this working attitude into the Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad.

He had an attitude that was completely better than those nobles who had a carefree attitude... who didn't care about how many people died, a serious attitude that was much better than them by several times to carry out matters...

Miller had borne up the absolute authority of the Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad just like that.

But, the nobles didn't realize that.

They never realized why Miller had chosen this Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad...

If they really knew Miller's person and ability, they should know, he should not be in the position of the Major General.

But, the nobles didn't discover.

They didn't discover that Miller was hiding many capable talents from the searching nobles, giving them more intensive training, keeping them by his side to protect them.

Claugh Klom, Calne Kaiwal, Luke Stokkart.

And numerous other talents were gathered together...

After that, the time came.

A large beam of light was born.

That large beam of light that was Sion Astal.

A light that was large enough to change everything.

Then, that was definitely not coincidence.

That was necessary.

The nobles had slaughtered too many.

The nobles had lusted, and had fallen too greatly.

The more seriously the nobles erred, the more the talented people who gathered under Miller's wing.

Yes, everything was necessary.

He had seen through everything. He saw that this country would leave the nobles' grasp, would right itself completely...

He had seen a more distant future.

Only that the nobles had not noticed.

Only they had not noticed, from the stage when Miller had come to the position of Major General, that their destinies had ended...

Following that, the revolution began.

No, that was another matter.

Anyway, now Miller was looking at the file that his subordinate had handed in.

A girl stood in front of him, peeking at his expression.

No, perhaps she shouldn't be called a girl. She was an elite who was able to become the captain of the Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad at the age of sixteen, and she was a first lieutenant.

But...

She was a cute simple girl who suited the word 'girl' perfectly.

First Lieutenant Milk Callaud.

She had brown hair tied up in a ponytail, and a cute doll like face. Round eyes, and a slim petite body.

No matter how you tried to phrase it politely... She didn't seem like a female who could move independently...

Chosen as the captain at the tender age of sixteen, her abilities were above the norm, but...

From the practical magic structures to its theory, from martial arts to various fighting arts, she had abnormal capabilities, and among these capabilities, her most outstanding quality was— The amazing ability on war tactics and strategies.

Other than that, she had the art of being able to reach out to her subordinates' hearts in an instant.

That should be said to be a natural talent right?

Miller looked at Milk with a pained expression, and the subordinates standing behind her.

Luke Stokkart.

Lear Rinkal.

Moe Velariore.

Lach Velariore.

These subordinates who were once Miller's, but were now completely under Milk's spell... a more accurate description would be, they had a similar protective attitude, swearing to be loyal only to her.

Not only that...

Among this young squad, Luke who was only twenty five years old, and was called the eldest, at the same time was also Milk's assistant officer whispered: (Today the major general has a bitter expression again~ Captain Milk.)

In that moment, Miller wanted to tell him "I heard that, Luke?", but he put aside the idea.

Milk said:

(Urgh~ He must be angry because we failed our mission right...?)

Saying that, Milk peeked at Miller's face, Miller seeing the situation,

immediately turned his gaze to the documents.

So Luke whispered:

(It's like that, Captain. It wasn't our fault that the mission was a failure, so even if we are scolded, you don't have to take it to heart.) Miller hearing this, laughed wryly in his heart.

Yes. The magnitude of Milk's power could be seen from this.

In the period of the revolution... no, even before joining the revolution, Luke wasn't a person who would talk like this.

He had a tall thin body, and was always smiling, seeming to be courtly... and he had a deceptively gentle tone...

And, the man called Luke Stokkart had an amazing ability at the same time.

He was always smiling, and he could finish his mission with an unbelievable calmness.

The first time he had seen him demonstrate this ability, Miller had even praised him silently.

That ability could possibly even override the Crimson Fingered Clough Klom.

Of course, on the matter of fighting ability, he was in the disadvantage.

But, he had the ability to remain calm no matter the situation...

Assessing the enemy's strength, finding the solution to success under various circumstances.

These fortes were not common.

From this point, no matter how special Milk Callaud was, she could not compare to Luke.

Luke was a kind of genius.

But...

He had become Milk's assistant willingly.

After coming into contact with Milk, he immediately lost his composure.

And had become very melodramatic.

Now Luke's face had an expression as if he were looking at his beloved child, a completely unprincipled look...

(It's because the opponent was too strong. He was really strong that everything became messed up. Ah, after looking at the report, we may be released from our duties...) Apart from the report that Milk had handed in, Luke had handed in his report too, he had mentioned the person that they were pursuing now, a man called Ryner Lute.

'To Captain Milk who is flowering, this person is very dangerous. As her guardian I am worried all day and night, and I am unable to rest properly.'

The content on the report, really made Miller confused...

What had happened to Luke...?

Towards this incomprehensible situation, Miller's face became more and more unhappy.

But, Lear, Moe and Lach were similarly drawn in by her...

Maybe this was the power of the girl called Milk Callaud.

Although this power was a little strange...

At this moment, Milk said in a small voice:

(That, that won't do. I must capture Ryner. Because, because, I told Ryner long ago. But Ryner eloped with that beautiful woman... so I must capture Ryner that perverted man!) Did she really think that Miller could not hear her loud voice?

At this moment.

(...But, Captain, although you say that. The current problem is, we can't defeat him...)

When Luke spoke till here—

"No~ I must arrest him!"

(Ah, shh! Shh! Captain, you can't be so loud! Do you know where this is?! This is the office of the major general!)



(Ah! Oh yes! Sorry, Luke. He, did he hear it...)

The conversation between the two of them...

Then had been whispering so loudly, Miller had already given up on what was missing from this situation...

He couldn't help but smile wryly.

"Huh... it's good that you're full of energy as usual... First Lieutenant Callaud."

"Yes, yes. It's thanks to the major general! Major General Miller, as always, has a face that's bi..."

At this moment Luke patted Milk from behind, Milk quickly stopped, then—"

"Uh, that, no, eh, that Major General Miller too... has been energetic."

Luke chuckled as he did these small actions.

It wasn't his usual smile, but it was chuckling.

He looked at Miller, happily enjoying Miller's reaction. Luke must have known that their whispered conversation was heard right?

Miller couldn't help but smile bitterly inside his heart that, in a short period of time, Luke had become an annoying person.

Because he felt at loss of what to do, Miller looked back at the report.

"You can save the pleasantries. Then, the actual problem is, your powers can't overcome this Taboo Breaker, right?"

Although he said that, but Miller was very clear, of course they could not win this fight.

The king had sent Milk to Miller and said:

"Let Milk arrest this person called Ryner, the situation will definitely progress in an interesting manner."

Although he had said that, but according to Miller's research, that man called Ryner Lute, and the swordswoman called Ferris Eris, both had histories that weren't normal.

Ryner Lute, born in the Roland Special Institute 307—that place where the

construction of the strongest military weapon took place, and had survived from the place, and even left extraordinary results in that facility that were said to be legendary.

And he was a person whose forte was to control all magic...

A person who could commit mass slaughter—

The wielder of the **Alpha Stigma**...

The other person travelling with him, was the daughter of the Eris family...

Although Luke was by her side, but to Milk, the burden was too heavy.

Because, this duo Taboo Breaker depended only on the power of two people, to defeat the Mage Knight Battalion of the Imperial Nelpha.

Talking about the Mage Knights, on the surface they were the strongest squad of that country...

Simply speaking, arresting such an amazing fighting monster, it was really a courageous expedition that had no plan.

This was an abnormal matter.

Yes. Abnormal.

But...

“Then? You can handle it? Or can you not win?”

Milk nodded as if expected, saying:

“Of course! This mission is too simple! The other time it was just a coincidence that the Imperial Nelpha Mage Knight Battalion...”

Luke and the others hearing this, became frantic.

“Wait, wait a moment, Captain? What are you saying?”

Moe said:

“It’s, it’s impossible. Fighting with a monster like that Taboo Breaker... I think we should give up on this mission...”

But at this moment—

“Enough! Please be quiet!”

Milk pointed at her subordinates, saying determinedly:

“Next time we definitely wouldn’t make a mistake!”

“Wu... where...?”

Milk nodded, earnestly saying:

“Because last time I didn’t act seriously... I... if I am serious, Ryner would be dealt with easily! He wouldn’t be dazzled by a woman whose only good point is her beauty! Am not right? Luke?”

“Ah? Ah, that... yes...”

Miller seeing this, smiled wryly. Luke really didn’t want Milk and that man Ryner to meet.

Because of that...

Miller smiled and nodded.

“I see. So if even Luke has the confidence that you will succeed, there should be no problem, right?”

“Ah? Ah, that...”

Luke looked at Miller, with a stupid expression.

That was the first time that Miller saw Luke having that expression. Miller said:

“Alright. If that’s the case, then from now on this mission will be left to Milk Callaud’s Taboo Pursuit Squad to deal with.”

“Ah...”

At this moment, Luke seemed to have discover that Miller was smiling faintly.

So Miller made his smile more obvious, seeming to tell Luke, you want to make a fool out of me? You’re too early by a hundred years! But apart from Luke who'd been acquainted with Miller for the longest, the others probably didn’t realize Miller’s change in expression...

To the normal people, they would probably feel that his usual tight features

had relaxed slightly?

Anyway, Luke seeing this, bowed his head in dejection...

He looked at Milk, and only saw the burning determination in her eyes.

“Alright, Ryner! Wait for me! Since we have decided that, then let’s set off for Runa Empire immediately! Runa is our allied country, it’s an easy matter for us to enter the its boundaries! Let’s go!”

Saying that Milk quickly left the room. After Luke watched her leave, he motioned for the other group members to catch up with her.

So the other three nodded.

“Please wait, Captain~!”

“Ah, it’s a rare chance for us to return to Roland, let’s find a place for us to play first, Captain!”

“Ah, I have information about a newly opened food store, so shall we visit it first?”

They chattered, leaving noisily.

After watching these subordinates leave, Luke sighed with an expression that Miller had never seen before...

Miller laughed.

And Luke had a slightly unhappy expression as he said:

“I say Miller-senpai, you’re quite willing to stand by and watch others suffer. Haven’t you seen the report that I wrote? It’s obvious, that man called Ryner Lute is not suitable for Captain Milk? Captain Milk should be suited to a more warm, hardworking, serious...”

He started to talk to himself again, Miller shrugged when he heard this.

“But, that is not decided by me. It was decided by First Lieutenant Callaud... or...”

Luke hearing this, frowned.

“Or Sion-san? That person looks like a good person, but in reality he also likes

to mess with others... Next time that I will submit a report on this matter, Major General Miller, you will have to help me hand it in to him then. For Captain Milk, having a romantic relationship now is too early.”

Saying that, he nodded self-consciously a few times.

Luke’s behavior that was like those foolish parents caused Miller to have no idea of how to deal with this.

At this moment, Luke said:

“...Oh yes, how is the situation on Sion-san’s side doing?”

This time, his tone had no indication of his previous lightheartedness, seeming to be very serious.

Miller said:

“...Many things seem to be quite challenging. Last night he came to ask me again if I wanted to be promoted.”

“Eh? What position does he want to promote you to this time?”

Miller hearing this, frowned slightly.

“He wants me to be responsible to leading the whole Roland army.”

“Wow, this time he wants you to be Field Marshal? Isn't that good? Miller-senpai leading the whole Roland army... Aside from the nobles, this is what everyone wishes for. If you become the field marshal, no one would have any objections right?”

The more Miller heard the more he frowned. He said:

“You clearly know that I rejected this offer, and you still continue to speak of it in this way?”

Luke smiled.

“Yes. Because you are not someone who wishes to become outstanding. No, this place definitely needs senpai. If we change to someone who is not suited, allowing the Taboo Breakers to escape... this will trigger another war...”

But, Miller interrupted Luke.

“That is not the only reason I’m staying here. Subordinates who are able to control this department can be found anywhere. You or Lear... The king said this before. He wishes to pass the responsibility of the Taboo Breaker Pursuit Squad to Lear, I’ll become a field marshal, Claugh and you will be promoted to Lieutenant General.”

Luke hearing this, suddenly stiffened his expression.

“Wow... me, me too?”

“...This isn’t something we’re casually talking about. The lack in manpower has worsened to this degree. But, I cannot leave here, you and Lear too. If you accept a position that will attract everyone’s attention, many things will become troublesome to carry out. But, lowly people should have lowly people’s opinions. We have to stand at the positions at the base of the foundation to support Roland... so, we can only ask Claugh to work harder.”

Luke hearing this laughed.

“Ah, Claugh is becoming the field marshal? He'll definitely sulk, right?”

Miller smiled too.

“Who knows? Because they just spread the news of the newcomers this morning. Well, judging by his personality, he will definitely shout and yell at Sion?”

Luke laughed until he could not support himself, saying:

“Then Sion-san will give him a reason he cannot dispute, so he’ll just simply accept it... it has always turned out this way. Although him becoming field marshal wouldn’t be as good as you, at least he can guide the Roland army in the right direction, right?”

Miller nodded.

“But the problem is...”

“...It is... the nobles right? Sion-san seems to be finally carrying out steps? I personally feel it’s a little late. If we don’t chase those corrupt nobles away soon, this country probably cannot last any longer right? Even if it is eradication or any other methods, it’s fine as long as it is done.”

Luke said heatedly, Miller studied his face.

“...Do you hate the nobles more than you did in the past?”

Luke replied:

“Don’t you hate them just as much, Miller-senpai? Those people only snatch everything away without even thinking. Among those in the Taboo Breaker Squad, there probably isn’t anyone who doesn’t hate the nobles, right? Furthermore...”

Reaching there, Luke’s expression carried anger...

“Captain Milk has suffered completely from their mistreatment! A child with such a happy personality... she only ate breakfast with us and chatted with us happily, then she cried as she said that she “never had a meal while happily talking with people”... What have those people done to Captain Milk... Just thinking about that, I feel such hatred that I want to kill them, sometimes at night I can’t even sleep... But, Captain Milk doesn’t hate her... no, it’s the family that bought her... Ah, it’s really enough!”

He said angrily.

Here it comes again... Miller shook his head in astonishment. Luke had been constantly talking about Milk lately...

But...

“Oh. The elite who graduated from the Cadets’ Academy with outstanding results, First Lieutenant Milk Callaud... although she is the daughter of a noble, but she is easy to approach. Isn’t this something interesting?”

Luke hearing this, nodded expectantly.

“...Because she is the same as us, she used to be an orphan... then she was adopted. She only represented the noble’s own child to come serve in the army, as a puppet... but, she was unbelievably obedient.”

“Yes... you have to protect her properly, Luke. Because this young generation is the pillar to support Roland’s future.”

“Eh? I think that I’m still quite young... Miller-senpai.”

“Compared to sixteen years old, aren’t you an old uncle?”

“Then senpai who is over thirty years old is an old man?”

“You...”

Miller frowned unhappily. Luke stuck his tongue out when he saw this.

“Ah, before I annoy you, I think I should escape.”

“Really, leave quickly! I have a large pile of work to do too. Ah, right, Milk Callaud’s team can have a few days of leave. You haven’t been back in Roland for a long time. Go and stretch your wings properly. But, be careful of the king? If you meet him, you might be dragged off to become an officer.”

Luke shrugged when he heard this.

“I know. I will be cautious of His Majesty Sion. Then, I’m going to chase after our princess now.”

As he walked out of the room, he crossed his arms in thought...

“A vacation... If a vacation disrupts our pace in life, it wouldn’t be a good thing for a child... This is a difficulty. I have to go and discuss with Lear and the others, we have to come up with a plan that can let Captain Milk have fun and benefit her at the same time... That means, it’ll be best to have a camp...”

He muttered to himself, walking further away.

Miller seeing this...

“...Really.”

He sighed again.

After that, under Luke’s plan of having a ‘happy summer break’, Milk spent her days happily by exercising or having a curry feast.

But, in the time that they had their break, the world still continued to change.

The change started from within Roland, it started with the nobles who had a great power—

Assassins attacked the mansions of nobles.

It was a good thing that the nobles defeated the assassins, and no major problem was caused.

After that, the assassins continued to appear around all the nobles...

Not long after, the assassins appeared at Milk's old house too...

No, it appeared at the noble family Callaud who brought Milk.

The moving air slowly started to expand in Roland...

But, how many people realized, actually those assassins had not killed a single noble?

Many nobles had suffered from attacks from assassins, but nobody died...

There was no casualties.

How many people could discover, that there was something abnormal and strange about these matters?

Yes.

Not a single person died.

There was no one sacrificed.

Then...

Seeing this information, Miller narrowed his eyes.

Then—

“... Has the purging finally started...”

He placed the file on the table, sighing, then called his subordinates over.

“Luke and the rest... no, what is Milk Callaud's pursuit squad doing right now?”

His subordinate answered:

“Luke-senpai and the others are now in the city buying things...”

Miller nodded.

“Call them back immediately. There's something for them to do.”

“Eh? But, Luke-senpai’s leave hasn’t ended...”

But Miller shook his head.

“I’ll say it again. Call them back. If they refuse, then tell this to Luke—‘Milk Callaud cannot stay within the country boundaries now. Or else she will be involved in a major commotion.’”

His subordinate hearing this, revealed a confused expression.

“Ah? Commotion? What is going on...”

Miller frowned in reply...

“Yes. Then, I’ll go tell Luke-senpai immediately.”

Saying that, the subordinate quickly left the room.

After making sure that his subordinate had left, Miller picked up the folder on his table again...

He sighed softly.

Turning time back slightly.

When Sion had just received news of Noa’s attack...

Ryner and Ferris were using their fastest speed, rushing towards a mountain that was far away from Roland...

The magnitude of their speed was not normal.

They ran faster than a normal person on a plain without any obstructions, although the mountains had countless growths, the branches were tangled, the path was slightly uneven, and their night vision wasn’t the best, but they continued to run...

Ryner spoke, saying with a slightly angry voice:

“Talking about that, what do you think? Actually climbing the mountain late at night... It’s really bad enough, I’ve definitely been overworked recently. Ah... Sion that guy, he must be misusing his privileges of being a king, lying on his

high-grade bed and sleeping comfortably...”

In truth, when Ryner said these, Sion had not slept for thirty hours straight, he didn’t even have the time to think of dozing off...

Of course Ryner knew nothing about this. Even if he knew, he would find some reason to complain...

Ferris nodded too:

“...The best bed and the best dango... Urgh. Earlier I said that it wouldn’t be bad being a deity, but it seems like being a king isn’t a bad deal too. If I feel bored, I can bully a pervert like you, and command you to run around the world.”

“Talking about that, I’m being bullied? Right?”

“Eh? Don’t tell me you aren’t?”

Ferris asked in reply. Ryner hugged his arms as he ran agilely...

“Ah, maybe I’m being bullied... I suddenly feel like my feet are very tired...”

At this moment, they finally stopped, then hid among the trees...

“Huh... finally reached. Really, why is it so far out? Why did they find such an isolated place to conduct their experiments on monsters, why did they take the trouble?”

Ryner peeked out from behind the shade, surveying the front.

He saw many torches lit in front of him.

It was a square that was built on the mountain.

The plaza was quite big. Honestly speaking, just by covering a square in the mountain, it should have taken up a sum of money and labour, right?

Cutting down large amounts of trees, the whole area...

But...

Ferris said:

“But... If that is true, they would need a place like this that would be fine if its surroundings were destroyed, right?”

Ryner nodded when he heard this...

“...That’s right. Based on this point, the mountains may be the most suitable place for this... Then, that brat called Arua...”

He looked at the square again.

There were quite a number of soldiers.

Judging by numbers, there should be thirty people?

And these thirty people weren’t ordinary soldiers. From their actions, it could be seen that they were specially trained soldiers.

Not only that, among them there were a few...

They were wearing different armour... Armour that were made with several circular plates that seemed like that were sharp enough to cut people just by touching them.

An eye-catching armour, and a clearly different aura from them... It was plainly clear. Ryner frowned and said:

“Ah~ Those people are the Mage Knight Battalion...”

The Mage Knight Battalion...

They had a strong power, just by having the battalion appear, was enough to change the tides of the battle...

They were always used to measure a country’s strength... on the surface they were the strongest squad that could change a country.

Even that squad had appeared here...

“This is going to be troublesome...”

Ryner said as if groaning:

Honestly speaking... just by Ryner and Ferris, the enemies weren’t easy opponents. And this time they had to rescue that youth, and as they protected him, they had to fight with the enemy... In addition, because they were allied with Runa, both parties had not fought against each other in some time, so they didn’t know what magic they would use...

If they were unable to use their magic without having a belief in it, then even by using Ryner's Alpha Stigma they would be unable to steal the other side's magic...

Furthermore the Mage Knight Battalion... Wait, if he had to list out all the bad points about it, he could list a long list of them.

Ryner suddenly had a defeated expression.

"Ah, impossible. Let's go back! We definitely..."

But, at this moment Ferris covered Ryner's mouth.

"Quiet. They're here. That's the one, right?"

So Ryner looked in that direction again.

And then...

"..."

He couldn't say anything.

The scene before him—it was too harsh...

A boy who had the same black hair as Ryner, and seemed to be still innocent appeared.

That boy was chained to a tree that was cut down. Then he was brought out by people rolling the tree.

The boy's body was crushed by the trunk of the tree that could easily be three times his weight... Every time he was crushed, the boy would scream...

But, the trunk didn't stop moving.

The only man there not wearing any armour smiled as he kicked the boy's head, then he shoved his boot into the boy's mouth.

"Ne, let's quickly see you lose control, you monster. Really, handing in the report about you to the superiors was a good thing, but then I have to stay in this isolated mountain to carry out research every day... It's really dismal. Everything... is your fault!"

Saying that, he kicked the youth's head again.

Blood droplets flew. The boy's mouth was probably bleeding? Blooding froth flew from his mouth... But, the man seemed to be enjoying himself, again and again, again and again he kicked the boy's head...

The boy's consciousness had already blurred slowly... it felt like he was numb.

The man's servant brought a water bucket over, grabbing the boy's hair, forcing his head into the pail...

"Ah... ah, ah..."

The boy woke up, starting to struggle... But, the man continued to push the boy's head into the water...

Struggle.

Fight.

But, his head was still forcefully kept there... The man laughed.

He laughed and said:

"Ah, the demon is struggling. Is it painful? Is it upsetting? Then beg me! Say, the saint that has defeated a cursed demon like you, Tese Chardi, please save me. If you don't say it I'll let you die!"

Saying that, he laughed again.

But, the boy's face was submerged in water, he couldn't speak at all...

When the boy's movements became weak, Chardi kicked hard at the person and bucket.

"Heh! This is boring! Lose control quickly!"

The man roared.

It was messy.

The boy was taken away... The girl that they met in the village Kuku said, it had already been eight days.

Eight days.

This matter had continuously happened for eight days...

Ryner seeing this...

“...”

He wasn't angry.

Only his body couldn't keep trembling.

It came suddenly.

He knew that feeling.

He had seen that scene before.

Man...

Man...

Torturing him.

Kicking him.

Not feeding him.

Mockingly saying, monsters didn't need to eat.

Someone threw faeces and urine at him.

His neck had been strangled so tightly that he nearly died of suffocation.

The things happening in front of him.

They were things he was familiar with... Too familiar, too familiar...

Ryner knew too, what would happen next. So, he shook.

By his side—

“Hey, Ryner, calm down. Even if you jump down now you can't save that kid. We have to come up with a battle plan. First I...”

Then, what was spoken next he couldn't hear it.

Because, he knew what was going to happen next.

Don't...

He thought.

I don't want to see it anymore.

No more.

Save me...

The man said to the boy in front of him:

“Damn, harming you yourself doesn’t have the power to make you lose control? Then... how about this?”

The man had a detestable smile on his face.

Ryner was very familiar with this kind of smile.

A completely nude and injured female’s body was thrown in front of the boy...

After that the boy who would only cry in pain, saw that—

“M, Mother...Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh?!”

That wasn’t a scream. It was a deeply devastating cry that was unbearable.

But, the man laughed.

He laughed.

Laughed...

Ryner seeing that, thought again...

Ryner could only tremble continuously.

Those people’s smiles.

It was the same like that time.

So he thought—

He thought of slaughter.

He wanted to kill this person, kill these people, and kill everything in this country...

But...

At this moment, the man laughed again.

“See, because of you, she’s dead. Your mother died because you are a demon. That means, the sinful father of a demon like you has to die too?”

Saying that, the boy’s father was carried forward by the soldiers...

His father was still alive. His body was covered with injuries too, he seemed to be very weak. When he saw the boy...

“A, Arua?!”

“Father!”

The two cried simultaneously.

The youth said:

“M, mother... mother because of me...”

But, the boy’s father shook his head hard.

“It’s not your fault! It’s not... it’s these people. These people are crazy. This definitely isn’t your fault. So you can’t do what they want, Arua. Even if I am killed, don’t worry. You’re still alive. You cannot lose control, lose your humanity...”

This conversation.

This scene.

Ryner didn’t want to see it again.

He had seen it many times.

So, please don’t... let me suffer again...

In that moment—

“Ryner!”

A strong impact struck his head.

“Ah! Ouch?! Eh? That...”

Ryner was startled.

Ferris who had pulled out her sword at some point in time, waved her sword down again.

“Good. You seemed like you were about to fall asleep. Even so, next time I will change to using my blade to strike your head...”

Ryner frantically said:

“Urgh, chop? That isn’t the sound of hitting people, that’s the sound of chopping people, right? I will die, don’t mess around!”

Ryner shouted angrily as softly as he could, then...

He looked around again...

“Uh... I... what was I doing...”

Ferris stared at Ryner’s face, falling silent for a moment, then nodding.

“Yes. There’s no problem. That is the day dream that all perverts have. You are that kind of person. Are you imagining things again?”

Ryner hearing this.

“Eh?! Why do you always...”

But Ferris interrupted him.

“Shut up. We’re out of time. The boy’s father is going to be killed by the man who is as perverted as you. There’s no time to decide on our battle plan. We’ll break in by force.”

Saying that, Ferris ran out, Ryner was stunned when he saw this.

“Eh? Ah, hey... Ah, what break in by force... the enemy’s numbers are not small...”

In the end, he followed after Ferris...

As Ferris defeated the enemy, she continued to move forward in a straight line... She had already reached the middle of the square—where the boy was.

“No, don’t leave me behind...”

Ryner quickly followed after her, at the same time he rapidly drew some glowing letters, creating magic, protecting Ferris.

He wasn’t using the magic that belonged to Roland Empire, but he was using the duplicated magic he had learnt, from when he met the deceased Estabul Kingdom soldiers.

This way, even if the origins of his magic was recognized, at least it wouldn’t

worsen the relationship between Roland and Runa, right?

The remaining problem, was the armour and weapons that Ryner and Ferris were wearing, that had the mark of Roland... But, they were attacking when the enemy was unprepared, and they were moving at a fast pace.

They shouldn't be easily recognized, right?

Anyway, Ryner aggressively started to chant the magic verses...

The Runa soldiers were shocked.

They probably weren't expecting to be attacked?

The team of thirty soldiers were thrown into chaos, even the location of their enemy and what kind of attack they were launching was unknown to them...

"Maybe there's a chance..."

When Ryner was muttering to himself, he suddenly frowned.

In front of him...

Unlike the other soldiers, the Mage Knight Battalion who had clearly grasped Ryner and Ferris's movements, according to the direction where they were rushing towards, discovered that their aim was the boy... They gathered at where the boy was...

And they yelled—

"It's, it's those people! They're not using magic from our country!"

The normal soldiers behind started to regroup...

Ryner couldn't help but groan in his mind.

"Damn it, it seems like ambushing them doesn't have a good impact. If this continues, we probably may not be able to save the brat and his father..."

At this moment Ryner shouted.

"Hey, the kid's father! You can't depend on us to save you! Help us! First push off that stupid noble, and loosen the kid's chains!"

He shouted, the father of the boy who had been lying limply on the ground...

"You, are you here to save us? ...From a different country... Ah, Arua, Father

will save you now!!”

The man who was a father painstakingly stood up with his heavily injured body, wobbling as he ran over to the boy.

Luckily, the noble had already run off by then, he was gone.

Anyway, the man desperately ran towards the boy...

Arua seeing this, revealed a happy expression as if he were unable to believe it.

“Father! Father!”

He called for his dad...

Perhaps there will be a possibility for survival. Ryner thought. The father would loosen the chains, escaping with Arua... They only needed to come up with a plan during this period of time to restrain their enemies...

He thought that that was impossible.

If it were only he alone it would be pushing it, and...

He looked at Ferris who had power stronger than other, flying in front of him like a whirlwind...

Ryner thought.

If he moved with Ferris, there should be hope.

Yes.

As long as he acted with this person, it would definitely...

The boy’s father shouted.

“I, I’m going to loosen your chains now. I will definitely save you...”

Then...

At that moment...

With a gurgle, it dropped.

The father’s head dropped with a thump, dropping onto the ground...

The Runa soldier held a bloodied sword...

Arua saw that.

In that second, his eyes widened impossibly...

A five pointed star arose.

The same red five pointed star like Ryner.

Alpha Stigma.

The monster, demon that was cursed... that everyone was frightened of and hated...

Once they felt that everything had become hopeless... losing control...

They would create a mass slaughter ground.

They would attempt to destroy everything. They clearly didn't want that, but they would have no choice but want to destroy everything.

Every time, in the darkest, darkest depths of their inner hearts...

The boy opened his mouth.

Then—

“Ah, ah, aaah, aaaahh, aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhaahahahaha...”

Ferris shouted when she saw this:

“Ryner, go!”

She hit the soldiers in front of them with a sweep of her sword.

The Mage Knights had already started some sort of incantation directed towards Ryner, but, Ryner didn't regard that.

He ran straight towards the boy, punching the face of the soldier who attacked him, the one that had killed Arua's father, striking him to the ground...

Then...

He covered the eyes of the boy who was laughing continuously, his laughter was nearly becoming screaming... wiping away the five pointed star that was slowly multiplying in the boy's eyes...

Following that he punched the boy's abdomen...

The boy's laughter stopped abruptly.

He stopped moving.

Ryner turned back and said:

"I succeeded, Ferris, it's a success. I stopped him. I stopped him from losing control..."

But, Ferris ran over when she heard this, her long sword gleaming. And the chains surrounding the boy shattered...

"Ryner, carry the child, escape! The current situation..."

Ryner nodded.

"I know. We can't win..."

A few Mage Knights told them:

"You... going with that demon? That is our research material. If you take it, you will be seen as the demon's companions and receive God's punishment..."

Ryner hearing that.

"Ah? ...You say... God's... punishment?"

In that moment, Ryner looked at them.

His eyes too... had a red five pointed star like the boy...

The Mage Knights had surprised expressions.

"You, you too... are the demon's companions..."

But, Ryner glared viciously at them.

"...You people... earlier you said God's... punishment? Just because we have these eyes, God will punish us...? No matter what cruel things you do, God doesn't punish you, but because we have these eyes, so God will punish us?"



Ferris interrupted from the side:

“...Hey, Ryner. This isn’t the time to be arguing with them. Retreat immediately. If you don’t keep up, I won’t care about you.”

She started to run again.

Displaying a powerful strength that normal soldiers were unable to approach her.

Ryner on the other hand...

“Damnit!”

He followed closely behind her, starting to run swiftly.

As he ran, he carried the youth with his right hand, using his left hand to cover one eye, cursing again and again:

“Damnit, damnit, damnit, damnit...”

He moaned:

“What the hell is that supposed to be? What the hell are you all... saying that God will punish us? Since we are to be punished, then why did you create someone like me? If God exists, then give me an answer! Why did you create someone like me? Purposely creating me... so to play with me like this, and then give me my punishment afterwards?

“Stop joking!

“I’m not your toy.

“We’re... alive too.

“We aren’t... demons because we wanted to be born as that... living as monsters...

“We... don’t like having these eyes...”

The hand covering his eye clenched.

He remembered again.

Being recognized as a monster.

Being called a monster, and being on the receiving end of isolation and hatred...

No.

He had enough of being called a monster.

But, I hurt someone that I liked, I hurt everyone who was empathetic towards me.

That was clearly not because I wanted to.

This was clearly not because I wanted to.

But...

Because I am a monster...

His hand was trembling.

The hand covering his eye was trembling.

He knew, tears were flowing out from the eye that had caused him to be ignored...

His eyes stared at the boy in his arms.

At the moment, his expression was so vulnerable, so sad...

“...Or, is everything our fault? If this country really has a god existing here, I beg you, tell me the answer...”

He softly prayed.

Chapter 4: However, the pain increases

The location returned to the Roland Empire again.

Sion proceeded with a large-scale change in the internal affairs, giving most of the important positions to his trusted companions, a few days after that...

After a peaceful period.

Nothing happened...

The nobles did not make any strange moves because of this forceful manipulation of affairs, and trigger the rebellion that everyone was worried would happen one day...

There was no movements, the nobles didn't even complain...

It was a nearly terrifying peace.

During this period, Sion remained in his room, continuing to fight with the expanding pile of paperwork.

Claugh, Calne, Eslina and Nea who would come to disturb him at definite periods, had disappeared completely from Sion's side for this period... because they were very busy with their promotions and the changes in their subordinates.

Especially Clough, he had to take up the duty of handling the whole Roland army, and he also had to deal with the paperwork that came with the promotion and whatnot, he was busy with dealing with things that he was unfamiliar with every day...

At that moment, Sion finished reading through a pile of documents, after signing it and writing some instructions, he continued with the next one.

This was the document that the Field-Marshal of Roland Empire had handed in...

This was written on this:

“You actually gave me such a boring assignment! Sion, I will definitely kill you! Wait till I finish what you’ve given me, I will definitely kill you!”

This was a document with a terrifying tone...

Its contents may have even made some people blanch, but...

Sion laughed.

“Ah~ Claugh seems to be having a hard time too. Good...”

So, he wrote on the document:

“You will kill me after you finish working, that’s troubling, then I’ll give you some of my work. So you can look forward to it even more.”

Then, he pulled out a pile of work that he had planned to give Claugh, that needed the Field-Marshal’s signature, documents about the plans after today...

He moved it to the pile that was to be given to Claugh.

Sion smiled widely.

“This way, he’ll probably yell at me again?”

He said...

At the same time his hands stopped sorting out the paper work.

Then he looked out of the window.

He could see the whole of Roland’s capital, Reylude, from his office window.

He looked at the whole capital...

It was a peaceful scene.

These few days, the situation had been very peaceful, there completely wasn’t anything that was happening as predicted.

And...

It was very, very quiet...

And, this country was in the midst of changing rapidly.

The streets looked like normal from where they were sprawled outside the

window, but...

This country was changing.

With this move in the personnel, had ensured that all of the important positions in Roland were occupied by Sion's people...

It was a strange movement, this time, the people who were chosen weren't all noble born.

But, that didn't mean that there weren't any nobles in there. Sion didn't want to offend the nobles who opposed the king, he did not use any violent methods to proceed with the change in personnel as he wanted to.

He only chose the people according to their abilities, and it had turned out like that.

As long as they had power, Sion didn't oppose to the background of that person.

He thought that this was expected, and he trusted that this would allow the country to grow rapidly, gaining the power to go against other countries.

But...

The strange action of changing the personnel... a few days after the order had been announced, it had brought about an effect that was far more than what Sion expected...

The country had awoken in one breath.

They had thrown off the control of the nobles who only knew how to consider the benefits to them...

This country had awoken.

Many people with talents and expectations had come in from everywhere, their numbers were so large that it made him want to ask, where had these people been hiding before this?

The nobles still existed.

And they had a large power.

They had large lands, finances, personal armies.

But, the people could gain the highest positions in the army and internal government, this was currently the most important matter.

As long as they worked hard, they could replace the nobles, moving Roland.

Building a better country.

Pushing forward a better government.

Creating a better life.

Although the change in jobs had not ended, but most of the documents in the internal government were now flowing towards Sion.

They were files that were directed towards the expansion of Roland's progress, suggestions that people were making...

They were all different opinions and perspectives that were different from the nobles', that Sion had never thought of...

They were voices that wanted the best of this country.

They were different from the previous nobles whose voices were selfish, lustful and filled with lies, these were the voices of people who really thought well for this country.

If they did this, would the processing of goods be smoother? Would the movements of the merchant industry be more active?

In the time of a few days... Sion had only thought of giving the people an opportunity to think of the direction in which the country could expand...

Sion looked at the towering piles of documents in front him...

"I didn't think that there would be that many people making suggestions..."

He smiled in relief, then he narrowed his eyes.

"But..."

It was silent outside.

"...It's too quiet."

Sion muttered softly.

The nobles had not uttered a word towards the current situation, it was very

clear, this was a strange occurrence.

It shouldn't be like that.

Sion's eyes sharpened.

"They couldn't... be so docile? If they understood it so much, that they could be so insightful about the future... I wouldn't need to be so troubled, to think of plans to make them submit..."

At this moment, Sion stopped muttering, having a self-mocking smile on his face...

"...No, if the nobles had that kind of tolerance... I wouldn't need to be king, this country would be in their hands."

But...

That was not the truth.

The nobles were silly and cowardly, for their personal gain, they could even betray their own country...

They didn't have any visions of their future.

They only cared about whether they were happy now; they only cared about their own current satisfaction...

The present, present, present, present...

The future of this country...

The future of the people of this country...

They had never thought of it. They only thought of themselves.

Even if they had awakened they couldn't defeat Sion if they continued...

At that moment, wouldn't they sell out this country without panting or being red in the face? They would betray this country so that they would be able to drink the sweet nectar?

And, they planned to defeat Sion.

Sion understood that very well.

He understood those nobles who had called his mother a lowly bitch.

They only had lustful thoughts.

“...Yes. A dirty bloodline...”

Sion stared at his own hands, saying softly.

“My body has... dirty blood. The nobles who had been strung along by lust... my father who abandoned my mother... the blood line of my predecessor tells me...”

What are the nobles thinking? What do they want to do...

It is too quiet.

But, it wouldn't last if this continues.

Then, what are the nobles thinking?

Why have they not reacted?

Why...

Would the nobles do that to defeat me...?

Sion glared out of the window.

At that moment, someone knocked on the office door...

“...Report. In the Akmer region... the nobles have started to rouse...”

Sion didn't hear the rest of the report.

It's coming.

He thought.

It's finally beginning. The short rest had ended, the real Roland was showing itself...

The nobles would definitely not show their weaknesses.

They probably would turn it into a large war? And it was a war that was abnormally deep and ugly like a swamp...

The first light was...

Sion narrowed his eyes.

“Yes... the source is Akmer... right?”

That was the territory of Baron Kellar Froaude.

Yes.

It was the territory of Miran Froaude's father.

Sion ordered the subordinate outside the door:

"Call... Claugh..."

The Akmer region was slightly north of Froaude's capital, its geographic location, was closer to the neighbouring country.

Because it was near to the allied country Runa, it was the reason that it was responsible for all dealings with Runa.

There was a piece of fertile land in that large territory...

But, because Roland was near the southern end of the Menoris Continent, the weather was warm, and it was steady for all four seasons, hence every district had fertile land...

And Froaude's mansion was in the wealthy Akmer district.

No, compared to a mansion, it should be a small palace... or it should be more accurately a walled city.

Although the neighbouring Runa was an allied country, but, if there was war between the two countries, Roland would use this as their fort, to defend against the Runa army.

So, the mansion that Kellar Froaude stayed in was quite secure.

But the interior designs were not simple, on the other hand they were colourful but graceful, filled with the tastes of the baron who was the second richest.

Many nobles started to gather here...

The hall was now noisy with the society party...

While the orchestra played its beautiful songs, the nobles enjoyed rich wine, gourmet food as they casually interacted...

In that time, there would be nobles who continued to stream in, the banquet would become more noisy, and sophisticated...

Miran Froaude stared fixedly at this...

This scene.

With his cold eyes.

With that cold, extremely cold expression.

He stared at the gathered nobles coldly.

“As expected of Otou-sama. If you spread the order, there would be many nobles who turn up...”

He said politely.

The smiling man by his side said:

“Ah, this is thanks to your hard work, Miran. Because you gave me the chance to speak with Duke Stearead, so I was able to call over so many famous people.”

Saying that, he looked at Froaude.

He was a short, plump old man. It wasn't hot in the room, but his face was slick with oil... he had a faint demeaning smile, and a small aura.

But, Froaude looked at the old man, smiling.

“How can that be, my abilities aren't as good as Father's. I will still need your protection even after today.”

He said.

He called this man Father...

Yes, this old man was the person who was in charge of governing this land... the head of the Froaude family, Kellar Froaude.

Comparing the father and son, although he was a man, but he had a slim figure, and had a sharp beauty, Froaude didn't look like his father at all...

Actually, that was to be expected?

Because they weren't related by blood...

Kellar stared at Froaude.

“Oh. I will continue to protect you, don’t worry! Because you are my son whom I’m proud of. My adorable child... My choice was the right one... When you were still small, from the first time I saw you... You’ve grown up well to be talented and handsome. And your performance has displayed your abilities. Although I love the other lads too, but... you’re the best.”

He said.

When Kellar looked at Froaude, his eyes didn’t look like they were looking at his son, but rather like he was looking at his lover...

Froaude smiled when he heard this.

“It is an honor to be Father’s son.”

“...Oh. Adorable child.”

Saying that, Kellar stroked Froaude’s back gently.

In a moment.

Froaude narrowed his eyes slightly.

Cold eyes.

Those devil-like eyes that as if had no light, narrowed slightly...

Staring at Kellar with an expression like a black hole.

His eyes at that moment...

Froaude gently pulled Kellar’s arm away.

“Otou-sama. It has just begun. Let’s leave the pleasure for later. So that we do not waste this night, let us finish up with boring work, alright? Your guests have almost all reached...”

Kellar nodded forcefully when he heard this.

“Yes. You’re right. Duke Stearead is coming too... I must let him see my best side...”

Froaude shook his head when he heard this:

“Otou-sama should have any problems. Then...”

He raised his hand lightly, the orchestra stopped their performance when they saw this, the music circulating in the hall stopped suddenly.

Followed by—

“Everyone, today you have all come to attend my banquet, I am very grateful for that.”

Froaude said with a bland, clear voice.

A voice that was clear, but like a devil whose emotions had all been wiped away.

The nobles gathered turned to Froaude when they heard his voice.

Froaude bowed to them politely.

“The organizer of this banquet... is Duke Shetelud Stearead, and my father Kellar Froaude.”

The thundering applause made Kellar nodded his head, pleased, then he raised his hands to express his feelings.

Froaude looked at all of this, then checked that the five doors in the hall had started to close.

Kellar continued:

“I am very thankful that everyone here has accepted the invitation by Duke Stearead and me. Everyone gathered must know, why we’re gathered here?”

Everyone chorused:

“To teach that arrogant brat, Sion Astal a lesson!”

“If we hand over our country to that tyranny who underestimates us, and surrounds himself with trash, we will definitely be destroyed!”

“Pull that man off the throne!”

Everyone expressed their opinions, Kellar nodded.

“Yes. Now we must stand out. Although he has the blood of royalty, but he is only a dirty lad brought into this world by a lowly woman... Having that person as our king, would make us the butt of jokes by the neighbouring countries.

Before his power continues to grow, we should push him back.

“And the moment is now! My brilliant son Miran has thought of a great plan. I believe that it has spread to everyone... We will lend the power of the Runa Empire who the previous king had deep ties with, to pull down Astal. I hope that everyone can help me.”

The whole hall was immediately drowned with agreements from everyone.

The plan seemed to have succeeded.

Froaude’s eyes gleamed sharply.

At this moment, the doors to the hall closed slowly—

One, two...

Kellar said:

“I will let our hound Miran explain the specifics of this plan. Perhaps my teachings have been lacking somewhere... This child is not good at dealing with people... Please understand, and give him your warmest protection.”

There was a wave of laughter in the hall...

So, Kellar turned to Froaude with a satisfied expression, proud at his son...

“Ne, Miran, I’ll leave the rest to you.”

In this period, the doors continued to close one by one.

Three... Four...

Four... when the last door was still open, Froaude turned his attention back to the gathered group.

Then, he bowed his head to express his regards... then spoke:

“First I wish to ask something of everyone... Lately have you been attacked by an unknown person? According to my research, the king has hired assassins, trying to wipe out the nobles who oppose the king...”

Froaude’s voice had not fallen silent, when the nobles started to murmur.

“Yes, they did come.”

“They came after me too! I was nearly killed... It was a good thing that the

other person wasn't able to get what they wanted."

The hall started to buzz with these.

Froaude nodded when he heard this.

"As expected? So there would be that many people gathered here. The king didn't succeed, right? He's underestimating us. He actually sent assassins of that standard after us... Actually, those lowly acts would only make us love our country more... There must be some people who would feel that, making that Astal man the king, is a very dangerous thing, after being targeted by the assassins? I believe it too, that there may be some people here who don't agree with allowing that man to become king...

"The king failed. Because he sent those ineffective assassins, us nobles who have the power and love the country very much were allowed to gather here. That we were able to summon so many people... My plan has succeeded. Firstly I must express my gratitude to everyone who has come forward to the banquet."

Saying that, he bowed his head.

The nobles applauded passionately to Froaude's speech.

Froaude accepted this thunderous applause...

Then when he raised his head again, he smiled faintly...

He stared at the nobles in the hall.

The nobles were sure of their own stands, and they did not doubt that they would win—

They would save this country personally.

Everyone was filled with hope.

Froaude looked at the faces of the nobles... he looked at every face, seeming to smile mockingly...

At this moment, Kellar told Froaude:

"Ne, Miran, don't pretend, tell the plan to everyone. Even I don't know about the details... how will we join forces with Runa to defeat Astal?"

The nobles looked at Froaude again when they heard this...

Froaude nodded.

“The plan... yes. Then, I’ll begin. Firstly I’d like everyone to...”

Froaude paused, looking around...

Then simply said:

“... Please die.”

He only said that.

In a moment, the hall fell silent.

“You, you actually said something so disrespectful...”

“What are you saying...”

But Froaude interrupted them.

“Ah, you’re so stupid that you can’t understand what I’m saying? No... for my personal wishes, I can betray my country without changing my expression... Someone like you or perhaps you don’t understand this language? You ate my bait without hesitation, free bait...”

At this moment, Froaude checked that the last door had been closed.

“...Even if I say more, it’s useless. Anyway you will die here. All the doors have been closed. And you will be unable to leave. Now...” Saying that, he raised his finger slowly.

He raised that finger with a special black ring...

At this moment Kellar said:

“What, what is going on? Miran, why did you say something so strange...”

But, Froaude didn’t turn back and said:

“Darkness... appear...”

In the moment he muttered softly.

Something unbelievable happened.

Resting under Froaude’s feet, the shadows lying on the ground suddenly

swelled, breaking into several dark shapes...

Attacking the nobles.

In a moment—

The hall became hell.

Brains, bodies, arms, legs continued to be stripped from the nobles, flying into their air.

Every time the shadows crossed, blood, blood, blood...

Flooded the hall...

“You...”

Kellar’s legs folded in, and he collapsed on the ground.

Froaude turned back slowly...

He laughed.

Froaude laughed. Seeing the noble’s foolish appearance...

Seeing the piteous appearance of his father who had slumped down in front of him, he laughed.

“This-what’s going on, Miran... Unless you’re going to make me...”

Froaude nodded simply.

“I had planned this from the start, Father, I have been awaiting for this day very patiently.”

Kellar looked stunned when he heard this.

“You, you’re joking... Miran. Tell me, this, this is a lie... I, I have always, always loved you since the day I saw you as a child...”

Froaude laughed again when he heard this.

“...So what? Do you want me to love a person as ugly and foolish as you? Do you want me to love the foolish you, who has no future? If you’re joking, please keep it to a minimum. From the beginning, I have always treated you like a pawn. I have already decided where I want to go. And you, are only one of the pawns that I am using to reach my goal.”

Kellar said:

“Don’t, don’t say such nonsense! You were only five years old when I met you?! You... you couldn’t have been tricking me the whole time... You love me, your father...”

But, Froaude smiled at this moment.

Those red lips parted in the darkness...

“...At that moment you didn’t have the large authority that you have now. You had your brother, who was the original lord of the Froaude family was your brother. But, he died. And not only that, your relatives passed away because of accidents... leaving you as the only one. You gained a large land, money, power... After you set everything in order, I moved in... But, that was what I gave to you, now, I want it back...”

Kellar’s face blanched even further...

“How, how can that be... Then, it was a five year old child who killed the Froaude family...”

“Not yet. You’re left. But that’s going to end tonight...”

Saying that, Froaude slowly put his hand on Kellar’s head...

Kellar said:

“...Please, I beg you, wait. But, but, we had seventeen years together as father and son, and as lovers. You...”

Froaude smiled when he heard that.

“...Lower your voice, it’s very piercing. Goodbye, my lord father.”

“No, don’t...”

His voice disappeared.

As if enveloping Kellar, a silver black shadow seemed to swell in a moment...

His head, arms and legs disappeared... leaving a body that seemed to have been gnawed on thoroughly by beasts...

The voice of the other organizer of this party sounded from behind Froaude...

Stearead who had been threatened by Froaude to change to the royalist faction said with a shaking voice:

“You, you actually dared to kill... your father... and...”

Saying that, he looked at the center of the hall.

An unbearable sight laid before him. The nobles were continually assaulted by the shadows... they were dying.

Stearead looked upon this and said:

“...It seems that it was right to stand on your side, Colonel Miran Froaude... No, after that surprising shift in internal affairs, you have been promoted to Lieutenant General, right? Or, perhaps I should call you Baron Froaude?”

Froaude turned back.

“Remember, if you ever dare to betray me, I will kill you mercilessly.”

Stearead glanced around the hell-like scene in the hall when he heard that...

Nearly all the nobles were killed...

Stearead smiled self-mockingly and said:

“After witnessing this scene, who would dare to betray you? We... how would we be able to... fight with this kind of monster? I will never betray you...”

But, he had not finished.

In the next moment, his body disappeared, leaving behind Stearead’s head that was smiling sadly...

Froaude said:

“...Eh? This situation... it isn’t the power of my... ring that caused that...”

So he turned to the middle of the hall.

In the middle of the hall, nearly all the nobles were eaten by the shadows that Froaude had created...

But, at the back...

A man was standing by the side of the door that had closed first...

Froaude narrowed his eyes...

“ ... ”

It was a strange man.

He had messy and pink-coloured hair, a colour that was rare. He wasn't as tall as Froaude, but he could be counted as tall? A fairly proportionate body figure... it could be seen that had been trained well.

Even though he was facing a situation like this, those slim eyes still brimmed with confidence, staring at Froaude...

Froaude asked:

“...You actually defeated my shadows, who are you?”

The man shrugged.

“If I am here, it means that I'm obviously a guest...”

Froaude shook his head immediately.

“No. You are a visitor from another country, right? Just based on your pink hair colour... Roland almost has no one with that hair colour.”

The man smiled when he heard that.

“...Oh? Everything was seen through? As I thought, you are a very capable person. Those icy eyes are terrifying.”

“I want to thank you for your praise, and take it as a compliment... But, you say that with a casual smile, it doesn't seem like a compliment. Then, your presence in Roland... What are you here for?”

“Eh? Do I look like someone who has to answer that?”

Froaude hearing that, raised his hand slowly.

“Then, no matter whether you're willing, I will have you answer...”

The man whistled when he heard that.

“Is that it, the black ring you wear on your finger? The weapon that summoned those black shadows earlier? It seems as if it shouldn't be meddled with. You controlling such a large amount of shadows casually... and to be able

to use that weapon so skillfully... to reach that height, it must have been quite painful? You are indeed are very skillful person. I really don't want to clash head-on with you. And I have a job to do. I don't want to waste any energy here..."

Then.

"Darkness..."

The man frowned.

"That wouldn't do..."

Saying that, he raised the golden ring that he was wearing on his finger.

"Lightning beasts..."

"Appear!"

The two of them shouted at the same time.

In a moment, the darkness beneath Froaude's feet swelled...

Contrary to that, light appeared around the man... no, it would be more appropriate to say that it was lightning instead of light...

Several lightning blocks appeared...

They slowly formed several beasts.

Froaude narrowed his eyes when he saw this...

"...As expected. I saw the ability that vanished Duke Stearead's body, it was clearly not caused by magic. You have the same weapon as me..."

He said mildly.

The man shrugged.

"Ah, I really don't want to fight with you. Seeing my lightning beasts and having that reaction... that is my first time seeing that happen. Was this matter within your expectations?"

Froaude shook his head.

"It's not like that. I'm still quite surprised. You appearing here is already beyond my expectations. Of course I didn't think that someone among the

nobles would have realized my plan and attempt to kill me, but... if it were a normal opponent, this shadow could have solved everything.

But, with someone like you existing...

And you killed Duke Stearead...

I know. You are here to kill Duke Stearead who had contact with me. And along the way you would clear away the nobles who followed Duke Stearead...

From that, your origins doesn't need to be spoken out loud.

Who was it who had to kill Duke Stearead? Who was it to command you to kill him...?

Which noble was it? It should be the person behind the scenes, who remains unseen and commanded Duke Stearead...

Which country did that person sell Roland and Sion out to...?

"Which country are you from? Eh, I have two or three theories in mind..."

The man frowned when he heard this, having an expression as if wanting Froaude to release him.

"...How terrible... Just by exchanging a few sentences with you, it seems that I have leaked everything out without my notice... It seems that I am going to get someone mad at me. So, from now on, I will say nothing else."

Froaude replied:

"Eh. It doesn't matter. I will cut down that ring along with that finger, then I will capture you, slowly delaying you, until I have gotten all my answers, until you die."

The man laughed when he heard this.

"How scary... If that is so, so that I can explain, no matter what I cannot capture you... that means, I can only kill you..."

Saying that, the man waved a hand in Froaude's direction.

"I want your ring!"

In a moment, the lightning beasts moved towards Froaude at the speed of

light...

But, Froaude had several shadow beasts collide with them at an unexpected speed...

Froaude ran forward quickly.

He used the hand without the ring to point at the man, tracing out a magical formation in the air.

“WHAT I SEEK IS BURNING FIELDS>>>...”

The man scowled when he saw this.

“Urgh... he’s using magic... That’s not good!”

Yelling, he charged towards Froaude, waving his ring finger.

“Lightning beasts!”

He materialized a lightning beast in front of Froaude’s magic formation, cancelling the magic formation.

Froaude moved a step back and said:

“Appear!”

A shadow was released in the direction of the lightning beast.

Both sides separated.

Six shadow and lightning beasts were fighting against each other...

Both sides were equally matched.

It seemed as if they were unable to get ahead of each other.

The man had a distressed expression.

“Ah, you’re good. I could see this from our clash. This is troubling... it seems that it would be hard to have a conclusion...”

But Froaude smiled faintly.

“No. You should have discovered it? You can’t use magic. No, I should say, you have forbidden yourself from using magic. Perhaps it is to cover your identity, so that no one would be able to know which country’s assassin you are, right?”

You can't let me see you using your country's magic... so, you cannot use magic. That is the largest difference between you and I... If the power of the rings are equal, then I am at an advantage because I can use magic.

This is the first reason why this situation has benefits for me."

The man frowned when he heard this.

"Oh, the first? Don't tell me there are other reasons..."

"Yes, that's right, you also have a disadvantage. Because you cannot use magic, you will be unable to match up to my strength, so even if it seems you are talking to me casually, in actual fact you are actually searching for a way to escape. But, unless I give the command, otherwise the doors to the hall will not open. This way, your lightning beasts and you will have no choice but to break down the doors to escape, but... I will not let you have that chance. If you send one lightning beast to break down the door, I will use that opportunity to rip out your throat..."

The man shrugged when he heard this, seeming to want to surrender with his hands up.

"...Hey, that can't be? It was only an exchange of a few blows, but you could interpret so many things? Wouldn't you feel tired? Even if you aren't tired, someone probably has told you that you're annoying? You must have had no friends?"

Froaude smiled bitterly when he heard that.

"I wouldn't feel tired, but the latter part is right. Ne, let's stop with the nonsense. Please make a choice. Are you going to surrender? Or knowing that you will be killed, attempt to escape..."

The man simply said:

"Or suicide? There should at least be this option? If I am unluckily caught by you, I may not want to reveal my country's top secrets under intense questioning."

Froaude narrowed his eyes.

"Are you going to do that?"

The man shook his head, laughing.

“No, I wouldn’t. I have a better plan.”

Saying that, he reached into his pocket...

“The fourth choice.”

He took out a blue gem...

“The crystal of **lino Dwoe**... This thing can let me win this fight.”

Saying that, he threw the gem up, in a moment, the gem stopped in mid-air...

Then it started to vibrate.

Something seemed to resonate with it and release a piercing sound, the gem vibrated in the air...



The man immediately controlled the lightning beasts, releasing the shadow beast, making to chase after it...

Then, he stopped...

Looking at the gem.

The man took out the gem without hesitation and wanted to use the lightning beasts to destroy the door. He clearly knew that Froaude would attack him... but he attempted to destroy the door...

At that moment—

“...Damn it.”

Froaude seemed to groan, then he used the darkness to destroy the door nearest to him.

The man seeing that.

“As expected of a highly-skilled opponent, you’ve made a good judgment. But... it’s too late.”

With that, the man bounded off.

Following that, Froaude made preparations to escape...

But, the gem suddenly cracked.

In a moment, blue flames spat out from the gem, destroying the ceiling and floor... yes, it wasn’t burning them into pieces, but destroying them.

In a moment, the temperature in the room rose by several hundred degrees... then the difference in temperature caused the walls and ornaments to be destroyed even though they were not in contact with the fire...

The flames reached out quickly.

Approaching Froaude’s back...

Suddenly, the shadows protected his back, but...

Even that shadow was burnt away by that blue flame... no matter how much shadow he released, it was all destroyed.

At that moment—

Froaude had reached the door that led out of the hall, suddenly...

“Urgh...”

Froaude frowned.

The door had collapsed with the walls, blocking the exit...

It was the end.

He thought.

There wasn't any time to escape from the other routes, even if there were sufficient time, the flames had already approached areas where the strength of the darkness was unable to defend against.

If he used the darkness to destroy the door and wall in front of him, there would be a gap behind him, Froaude would be burnt to death...

“...”

He had lost.

He thought.

He had lost terribly.

He had underestimated his opponent...

Froaude stopped suddenly, closing his eyes...

And at this moment—

“Hey! What are you doing! Aren't you going to escape?!”

Someone caught his arm, pulling him over forcefully.

A strong power.

Froaude raised his head, for some reason, Claugh was actually in front of him...

“...How did you... Cla...”

But he didn't say anything much.

The flames that could destroy everything, were quickly swallowing them.

Froaude turned back, glaring steadily at the blue flames, waving his ring.

In a moment, a large amount of darkness appeared...

The largest amount of darkness that he could create so far continued to expand...

He was struck dizzy for a moment.

His arms were almost bursting with the effort. Even so, he frantically held on...

“Field-Marshal Cl-Claugh. Eight, eight seconds. I can only hold back the flames for eight seconds...or so...”

This was the limit.

No matter how many darkness was created, they were all extinguished one by one...

But Claugh smiled broadly.

“Froaude, you’re very strong! Enough. Hold on!”

He shouted, swinging his right arm. Then, the tattoo on his arm glowed...

Claugh touched his arm gently to the wall in front of them, and... in an instant, the wall cracked into pieces...

“We’re going!”

Claugh grabbed Froaude’s clothes, pulling him out.

They escaped out of the mansion quickly...

After that.

The whole mansion was swallowed by tongues of flame.

But, the fire continued to spread.

The flames expanded as if wanting to burn everything in this world passionately...

“Damn it~ How far is it going to go!!”

Claugh dragged Froaude, running at an unbelievable speed...

The scene was distorting.

The scene was warping.

Froaude watched this as he was dragged along.

The air was expanding because of the high temperature, so everything was distorting...

Then, when the flames had reached their maximum range, they suddenly vanished...

And...

The world returned to normal.

The mansion had completely been decimated.

It was a stunning display of power.

If the flames had continued to spread, they probably wouldn't be able to escape?

Froaude narrowed his eyes.

No, if Clough had not appeared at that crux in time, he would not have been able to escape from that hall, he would have been burnt alive...

Then at that moment, he already had prepared to die.

But, that man...

He had grabbed Froaude's clothes without turning around, running frantically, Froaude looked at him...

Froaude stared at Clough for a long while in their current state...

Looking at Clough who was desperately dragging Froaude and running...

He thought.

"..."

Then—

"...That, I have something I want to talk about... Field-Marshal Clough."

Clough hearing this.

"Ah? It's not the time for that now! We'll talk about it later, later!"

But Froaude said:

“It’s fine if it’s later, but... I have some information that you must know about. Will you give me a little time?”

“Ah that’s enough. How annoying! What is it!”

Froaude said with his usual mild tone:

“Field-Marshal Clough is using his full strength to escape... But in truth the fire has already extinguished. In other words, what are you escaping from?”

“Ah?”

Clough yelled foolishly, turning back.

He had a dumb-founded expression, looking in shock at the scene where there wasn’t any flames, then... he released Froaude’s collar...

“Why didn’t you say that earlier!”

He shouted angrily at Froaude.

Froaude dusted off his dirty clothes as he stood, shrugging:

“It’s because, even though the fire had stopped, the funny situation where you were dragging me and running desperately was quite amusing... so, I didn’t notify you in time.”

Clough hearing this.

“You... you’re the same as ever, an annoying person...”

“Then I apologize. Have I made you angry?”

Clough hearing that, glared viciously at Froaude.

“Ah? You have always made me angry. This time too, Sion worked so hard, hoping to reduce the sacrifices, so that he can govern the country in this peaceful situation, but you moved by yourself, moving first—”

Froaude nodded:

“The funny thing that I referred to just now is this. I’m very aware that you hate me. But why did you come to save me then? What’s happening now?”

Clough frowned.

“This... Because Sion wanted me to come and help you, so I could only come. I didn’t want to come at all...”

But Froaude tilted his head in suspicion.

“His Majesty? But, that’s strange. His Majesty only sent you, the Field-Marshal to come and help me?”

“Of course not! He wanted me to bring the soldiers. Sion said, Froaude is aiming to wipe out the nobles, but the other side will want to retaliate. He said that it was too dangerous for you alone, so he told me to take a large group of soldiers and leave the capital... But, you are always acting by yourself, taking the first step, this made me feel concerned... I wanted to punch you, so I quickly came here, and went ahead of everyone else.”

He said...

Froaude hearing that, felt more confused.

“You left the other soldiers, and came here first?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“But you clearly said it yourself, you didn’t want to come, you’re here on His Majesty’s orders, you came here reluctantly, but you abandoned your soldiers and came here first...? I don’t understand...”

Clagh revealed an irritated expression when he heard that.

“I’ve had enough, you’re very annoying, so didn’t I say, I was here to punch you!”

“You clearly didn’t want to come, but you came to save my life... You are a strange person.”

“Do you have the rights to say that?!”

Froaude smiled lightly.

“But, I still have to express my thanks to you. If it weren’t for you, I could have probably died, thank you for saving my life.”

Clagh’s expression turned serious.

“...Before you sincerely thank me, tell me, what were those blue flames?”

What was that, what happened? I have never seen magic like that.”

Froaude looked back when he heard that, he looked at the mansion that had been destroyed and left ashes and an empty land.

“That... It was my first time seeing something like that, too. But I know one thing...”

Clagh hearing that, stared at Froaude.

“What?”

But Froaude ignored his gaze, closing his eyes, then opening them again, staring at the destroyed mansion... then raising his head to look at the sky unfurled behind the mansion.

The sky was clear.

It was a cloudless sky.

It was so clear, as if there were no worries...

But...

Everything now looked so fake.

It was a fake steadiness.

It was a fake silence.

Froaude glared at the sky.

“...It seems, our war... has already started.”

He muttered with his usual bland and calm voice.

The scene changed back to Roland again.

This time it was solemn and quiet.

The throne where the king of Roland would seat on.

Sion was sitting on it...

He was looking at a strange scene in front of him.

Looking ahead, beasts that were made of lightning suddenly appeared...

The beasts locked down on Sion, attacking.

But...

“...”

Sion didn't move. Not only that, he didn't look nervous at all, staring at these beasts...

“It's useless.”

As he said that...

The beasts plunged towards Sion...

But, things happened in a blink of an eye.

Holding something, it swept past, faster than thunder and lightning...

The lightning beasts disappeared.

It was incredible.

The lightning beasts were killed, as if they did not exist at all.

In exchange, what appeared in front of Sion was...

Someone who had blond hair and narrow eyes, and unearthly beautiful features.

A handsome man.

But he didn't hold any weapons.

But, he turned his gaze to the entrance to the throne room...

He said with a clear voice:

“...Eh, an interesting attack tactic. Lightning beasts huh... But, it's only fun. It wouldn't work in front of me. If you have any conspiracies on the king of this country...”

In a moment.

The man had an unbelievably strong killing aura...

Sion nearly made a noise.

The man in front of him...

The killing intent that the current head of the Sword Family Eris who was tasked with protecting the country's king, Lucile Eris was releasing...

Sion was trembling because of the killing aura that the man who was protecting him was giving out.

Although he had seen it a few times, but he felt that this man was like a monster.

Then, Lucile slowly smiled at the person who was standing to the left of the entrance:

"You will disappear. You wouldn't feel any pain, just vanish. You can tell your companions, tell them, if they dare to touch Roland... there will be consequences."

But, he didn't need to explain.

Lucile was very special.

As long as he stayed in this country... no one would be able to harm Sion.

The other party seemed to understand this. The presence disappeared immediately.

Or perhaps he escaped?

Confirming that, Sion said:

"Perhaps it would be better if we caught him?"

Lucile turned back, smiling warmly.

"That is for you to decide. Or are you begging me? If that's the case, I can catch him back for you. Strange lightning beasts are quite interesting, what about it? Do you want me to go?"

As has asked, he stared at Sion in amusement.

But Sion shook his head.

"No need, I'm not requesting for you to do anything. I'm concerned that if I ask something of you that I should not ask for and make you angry, I would be killed by you. Anyway, letting him see the pressuring and terrifying presence that you have, and letting the person behind the scenes know about this; this is

currently the most effective method, right?”

Lucile even smiled, looking at Sion, as if he were evaluating the value of something, and listened carefully.

No, in actual fact he was really evaluating.

He was evaluating whether Sion had the ability to fully make good use of his function as the king of this country? If that were the case, then protect him, or else...

This man could kill Sion without a change in expression?

He was that kind of person.

And, no one could go against him.

Lucile stared at Sion for a while, then said:

“Yes. You’re fine. You haven’t spoiled yet. This country has a good king. The chaotic era is coming soon? But I believe, as long as you are king, this country can survive.”

Saying that, Lucile’s body slowly thinned out like how he had first appeared, as if he were a light ray.

He was a monster indeed.

To Lucile, he was only erasing his presence, but, people could no longer see him.

The presence was beyond Sion’s detection.

But, Sion was already used to this scene...

Sion told Lucile who was invisible:

“If I couldn’t protect this country, what would you do?”

And, a voice spoke simply...

“At that time, I would kill you, then set up a new, stronger king, so, you don’t have to think too much about it, just let go and do your best. At the time, when you lose your power, I will kill you.”

Sion smiled bitterly.

“How comforting.”

He muttered softly.

Then he hugged his arms.

“...Let go and do what?”

Saying that, he lapsed into silence.

Then he thought.

The lightning monster just now...

It wasn't any normal magic.

That was...

What had actually happened?

If that was an assassin sent by the nobles...

Claugh and Froaude had not returned.

He didn't know if they were safe.

There was not enough information.

The information was really lacking.

What had happened to change in the country...

Sion remained like this, unmoving for some time.

The scene changed again...

Somewhere in Roland.

An elderly man...

“Indeed... Never mind. Anyway we have already killed the traitor Stearead. This way, that guy Astal wouldn't be able to grab a hold of my tail? Now...”

He said to the man with messy and uncommon pink-coloured hair standing beside him:

“In the future... How many futures will this country have? Going against that

country... will there be many futures?"

Saying that, the old man smiled.

Then... the location changed again.

Runa Empire.

In a city that was close to the Roland Empire's boundary...

There was a man and girl with pink hair that was rarely seen.

It was a girl who was very cute. She was tiny, and looked to be about twelve or thirteen years old.

She had long hair and her fringe was cut right above her eyebrows. She wore a black dress that was outfit, but at the same time looked like a fashionable uniform... She had slim eyes, although she was young, she was a beautiful girl who would endear people.

But her tone—

"Really! Why do you laugh foolishly in front of the king, don't you feel embarrassed? Sui Onii-san!"

She scolded anxiously, without stopping.

The man beside her who was called Sui looked to be a little cowardly, but he smiled mysteriously...

"Ah? Kuu-chan, I don't think that I was laughing foolishly..."

He had the same hair colour as the girl called Kuu-chan, and they looked alike...

They were probably brother and sister?

But their personalities...

Kuu said:

"Look! Again!! That's enough! It's so embarrassing in front of so many people. Be more serious. We are the ambassadors from Gastark! If Sui Onii-san is not more serious, we will be mocked at by the Runa people!"

“That, that’s right. I’m sorry, Kuu-chan. Then, then, what do you think of this?”

Saying that, Sui pressed his lips firmly together, but those eyes that were always smiling and that gentle face had no trace of nervousness...

“There’s no change!”

Kuu got even more angry...

This wasn’t the capital of the Runa Empire.

But, the king of Runa Empire was sitting in front of them...

And it was clear that even if Sui wasn’t smiling cheekily, these two people were proceeding with an unnecessary conversation, it was clear that they weren’t very suited as ambassadors...

But...

“...You, what are you...”

The king of Runa spoke with a trembling voice.

“...Who...are you...”

Sui and Kuu hearing that, turned to look at the king...

Kuu said:

“Didn’t I say we are the ambassadors from Gastark! Our king says that he wants to work with Runa, so we are here to build relations with you! Of course we wouldn’t let you oppose us.”

The king hearing that...

“But, but... the Runa Empire are allied to Roland already...”

Sui shook his head:

“Don’t say such pretty words. We already know of the secret contract between you and the nobles from Roland, attempting to pull down the current king of Roland. If I didn’t remember wrongly, it should be Duke Stearead who is at the center of these nobles, who pushed forward this plan?”

When the king of Runa heard that, he froze momentarily.

“You, you even know about this...”

But Sui beamed from the beginning to the end.

“But Duke Stearead is already dead. He was killed by our companion. And we have already successfully contacted the most powerful nobles in Roland. It’s only sooner or later before Roland is taken down? Then, let me ask you again... Your Majesty, what is your choice? To depend on us Gastark... or...”

At this moment, he turned his head.

Countless bodies were lying in front of him.

It wasn’t ten or a dozen corpses.

A hundred, two hundred... A large number of Runa soldiers were on the ground...

It was an unbelievable sight.

This siblings, lending each other’s power, had cleared out the Runa soldiers... and the elite soldiers by the king’s side.

The king was trembling.

Looking at the two monsters in front of him...

Seeing the king shivering uncontrollably, Sui said with a steady expression:

“Ah, please don’t be scared. As long as you listen obediently, we wouldn’t do anything to you. I think it would be wise if you chose us? But, I think you are unable to make up your mind? Then I’ll give you a little time to think, we still have some things to do in Runa, when we finish that job, we will come back to find you... I hope we will have an answer by then.

If you value your life.... No, or I should say, if you value the life of your precious daughter, Princess Eina... this would be more effective, right?”

In a moment. The king’s face turned green...

Sui smiled when he saw that.

“Ahaha! You don’t care about the other commoners’ lives, but your daughter’s? Ahaha... How interesting. Then, we look forward to your reply. Ne, Kuu-chan, where do we go next?”

Kuu hearing that, pouted.

“You already forgot?! Really, so I can’t leave Sui Onii-san alone! You should at least be independent! Ne, think back for yourself. Answer in five seconds. Come, five... four...”

Saying that, Kuu started to count, Sui seeing that, had a troubled expression.

“Don’t, don’t say it like that... Tell me. I really forgot... I think it’s some mountain with a village, right?”

Kuu hearing that, revealed a bemused expression.

“You’re really hopeless. It’s Rajit Village. It’s said that the Runa army has been researching on a child with **Alpha Stigma**.”

Sui modded.

“Then we should go to look at this Rajit Village? And we have to get to the **Alpha Stigma**...”

“Anyway, we have to be quick. If he loses control and destroys himself, we can’t get the crystal...”

“Then let’s go!”

“Yes!”

The duo left the hall as they conversed casually.

They stepped over the bodies without any comment...

Looking at this...

The king who had eighty thousands soldiers and controlled everything in the Runa Empire...

Curled up in terror, unable to move at all.

Prologue 2: -still, that they may forget it one day

He had not awakened...

Once he discovered that this world was enshrouded in darkness...

Actually he never wanted to discover it.

Because he knew, once detected, he couldn't turn back.

Because he knew, the deep darkness would not let one sigh in peace.

He found that if he didn't continue to move ahead, there would be a large amount of pain awaiting him.

A strong grief that he never had experienced.

A strong pain that he never had experienced.

No one wanted that.

No one wanted to change to that, but...

Even so, reality forced people to make decisions, forced people to choose that pain.

How painful.

How detestable...

He wanted to escape.

Yes.

He should escape, that way he would not have such a heavy burden?

Put down everything and escape, could he gain respite?

But...

Sion sat on the throne, listening to Claugh and Frouade's report.

He stared at Frouade.

"Then, the nobles under Duke Stearead have all fallen into your trap..."

Frouade nodded.

"Almost all the influential nobles... have been killed."

He replied simply.

Sion listening to that, his expression changed slightly.

The anti-royalists who were under Stearead...

The numbers were not small.

But, this man said that he had killed all those people. He didn't let anyone who was unequipped fall into the trap, and kill them.

He didn't even let the other side negotiate, he purged all of them...

Perhaps there were some nobles who didn't really have the intent to go against the king...

But as of now, Frouade had killed them.

He had killed almost every one of them.

Sion's expression contorted because of this. Contorting as if he felt the pain.

So Frouade said:

"As of today, do you still regret sacrificing these nobles' lives?"

Claugh interrupted:

"Ah? Of course Sion wouldn't feel good about this! Acting by yourself, killing people... Don't you feel anything? Does killing people mean nothing to you?"

Frouade replied simply:

"If there is a need to kill, then I will kill. If I feel guilty because I vomited over

it, then what can I do about it? I believe His Majesty feels the same.”

“You... Don’t utter such nonsense. Sion is different from you...”

At this moment, Sion raised his hand up.

“Enough, Clagh. Now isn’t the time to be fighting over this. What I’m frowning over it because... the current situation. The leader of the anti-royalist faction, Duke Stearead, is dead... And it was not by our actions, he was murdered by someone else... Actually before this I had expected that it would turn out this way. I knew there was a noble who held great authority behind Stearead and had not appeared. But...”

Sion narrowed his eyes at this point, not saying anything else...

Froaude nodded, saying:

“Yes. The person who killed Duke Stearead isn’t from this country. Then from this observation, it is clear that this noble has joined forces with people from other countries.”

Clagh hearing that, said:

“Other countries? Which country? Didn’t you find that out when you fought that person?”

“Eh. Don’t look at me like that, I did my best... But, the opponent couldn’t be taken lightly...”

“In the end he escaped, so it was meaningless.”

Clagh said challengingly, Froaude replied simply:

“Yes. It pains me to let him escape. If you could have hurried over earlier, perhaps the situation could have been overturned.”

“Eh? Ah, don’t push the responsibility to me!”

Froaude seeing that, smiled blandly.

“...I was joking.”

Clagh revealed a surprised but annoyed expression.

“You, your joke... it’s really not funny at all... And it make me feel strangely

irritated... Let's put this aside, about the foreigner you talked about, what country do you think he's from?"

Froaude replied:

"...That's hard to tell. It has to be further north from Runa... Apart from Cassla... there should be little countries that would attempt to invade other counties. But there are other countries that are quite powerful... That country that destroyed Stohl, starting to ascend..."

Then, seeming to interrupt him...

"Gastark... huh? It seems that we need to send someone to know more about the situation."

At this moment Claugh said:

"Ah, then I..."

He quickly tried to volunteer, Sion hearing that, had a surprised expression.

"How can you go? You are the Field-Marshal of this country? You want to listen in on the enemy's situation with your status?"

"How is it not feasible? Ah, how about this. Anyway it's too troublesome being Field-Marshal, I'll hand it over to Miller-sempai, then you can send me to spy on them. Not thinking about Miller-sempai, and making me Field-Marshal was the weird thing. Then I'll go handle the procedures of the hand over..."

But Sion interrupted him.

"I did request for Miller to be Field-Marshal, but he rejected."

"Eh? Is that so? So you turned to me to be Field-Marshal."

"Wait, wait a moment... Then, then if this is the case, if I reject this, can I not be Field-Marshal..."

"No. It's too late."

"You, you're too cunning, Sion! Why can Miller-sempai reject, but I can't!"

Claugh protested, Sion smiled wryly and said:

"Ah, don't be so angry. How about this, if Miller agrees to be Major-General..."

perhaps I can demote you to Lieutenant General...”

In a split second.

Claugh immediately spun around, dashing out...

“Hey, Sion! Remember what you just said! I’ll go convince Miller-sempai now! Until then, the person who’s going to Gastark is me!”

He said, as he ran out of the hall...

Sion watched him leave, then sighed...

“That guy... seems to hate the paperwork that he has to do after becoming Field-Marshal...”

Froaude said:

“I personally think that Field-Marshal Clough is much suited to directing the army than doing paperwork... But, letting Colonel Miller be Field-Marshal... I don’t think it is a good idea. Colonel Miller is too serious.”

Sion narrowed his eyes and stared at Froaude.

“Oh? Then, do you wish for Clough to continue being Field-Marshal? Or... are there any others... oh yes. What about you, do you wish to be Field-Marshal?”

Froaude shook his head when he heard that.

“No, I cannot be Field-Marshal. My thinking is closer to your first thought.”

“...That is to let Clough be Major-General?”

“Yes. It should be clear what reasons I have for thinking so? For Roland’s future, the leader of the army needs Clough Krom more... it would need someone as charismatic as him. Because, unthinkably, there are many talented people who listen to him. Although it doesn’t measure up to Your Majesty, but... his uncertain, special nature of being strong and gentle, it easily controls people’s... the citizen’s hearts. For Roland, this special ability will...”

Froaude looked at Sion’s face when he said that, then stopped.

He continued:

“...No, I don’t think I need to elaborate. Your Majesty, you look a little tired.

Would you like to rest for a moment? Even if it is Claugh Krom or Rahel Miller as the Field-Marshal, if this country doesn't have you, it would be unable to progress, so... please take care of your health. Then, please excuse me..."

He left the room as he said that.

Sion did not call him back.

What Froaude said just now—

It repeated itself in his mind...

"His uncertain, special nature of being strong and gentle, it easily controls people's... the citizen's hearts. For Roland, this special ability will..."

Sion frowned.

If there was war, someone like Claugh who was able to control the citizen's hearts, were much more suitable to lead the army than people like Miller who were able to control groups easily.

So that the soldiers would be deceived, thinking that as long as they followed Claugh, no matter what disadvantages they faced, perhaps they could win.

So that the soldiers would be deceived, thinking that as long as they followed Claugh, they could relax.

In this way, the normal soldiers would gamble their lives for the country, because Claugh was there.

So that they would gamble their lives and fight, he needed Claugh's charisma.

If it worked, the soldiers would probably use their lives to build an irreplaceable strong army...

If they fought with other countries and wanted to survive...

This was necessary.

On this continent, Roland wasn't a large country.

There were other stronger, more powerful and financially strong countries.

If they needed to fight these countries one day...

Even if they used dirty methods, they would not regret.

They would set traps everywhere, form alliances, then betray the alliances...

That was not enough... they needed to brainwash the soldiers of this country, let them think that they would win... then make them sacrifice themselves for the battle...

“...How cruel...”

Sion moaned.

There wasn't enough time.

If there were a little, only a little more time... then they probably could strengthen the foundations of this country, and gain enough power to go against the other countries, but...

Reality had turned harsh.

Even the internal affairs... the problem of the nobles couldn't be solved in time...

Reality had turned cruel.

Then he discovered that everything...

The peace and everything that he saw was fake.

He discovered that this world was actually covered in darkness...

He didn't want to discover this truth.

Because he knew, once he knew of it, he couldn't turn back.

Because he knew, the deep darkness would not let one sigh in peace.

He found that if he didn't continue to move ahead, there would be a large amount of pain awaiting him.

A strong grief that he never had experienced.

A strong pain that he never had experienced.

No one wanted that.

No one wanted to change to that, but...

Even so, reality forced people to make decisions, forced people to choose that

pain.

If they didn't want to die, they had to kill people.

If they didn't want to die, they had to wipe out other countries.

If they didn't want everything to be stolen from them, they would have to steal everything from the opposition...

Plundering.

How painful.

How detestable...

He wanted to escape.

Yes.

He should escape, that way he would not have such a heavy burden?

Put down everything and escape, could he gain respite?

But, where could he escape to?

Where would he escape to?

In a moment, in the distant past... the memories of the time where he didn't have the troubles now flitted across his mind.

Before he became the king...

He had Ryner, Kiefer, Fahle, Toni and Tyle...

At that time it wasn't like he had no troubles.

But, he had thought in this fashion at that time—

Squabbling with his companions, laughing together, mending past relationships...

What else could he wish for?

If this was the peaceful era now, then it was only temporary...

Why did he need revenge on his brothers, why would he need to become king?

If he were with Ryner and the others...

That was what he thought, even if it were only for a moment.

The Sion in his memories that was with Ryner and company, was a happy period filled with laughter...

It was a very happy time...

“...But... this world doesn’t have... any place to escape to... Ryner.”

Sion mumbled with a slightly lonely expression.

It was evening.

The sky was red.

It was red like that day.

As if stained with fresh blood...

The blood-red sky.

In a villa of a noble of Runa Empire.

It seemed like a stable of this villa, but it seemed like the money spend on construction was quite a lot...

Ferris said:

“Eh... then, the girl you violated before is pregnant, then after the woman died, so she passed her child to her only relative, and that is you who is the father, now how do you think you will take up the responsibility of taking care of this child?”

She looked at the black-haired youth who was sleeping on Ryner’s back.

Ryner’s eyes were half-lidded when he heard this...

“...Urgh, when did my life become so dramatic?”

“...Mm-hmm. With only a breath, you make women pregnant. A dangerous man indeed.”

“Wow... that’s amazing... then, as long as I walk on the streets, my life will become dramatic?”

“Yes. And it will be a drama full of dangers.”

The two started their lame conversation again, Ryner shaking his head.

“Never mind, let’s not play around... What do we do with this child now...”

Ryner looked at the child on his back.

It was a young black-haired boy.

Like Ryner, he was a boy with **Alpha Stigma**.

Like Ryner, he was a boy who had been hated and feared by everyone...

Ferris did not speak, staring at the boy for a while.

“...Talking about which, Ryner, how old are you now?”

She asked, Ryner tilted his head in suspicion.

“Ah? Why are you asking that now? I’m asking you what will we do...”

But Ferris said:

“Don’t question so much, answer me. How old are you?”

Ryner thought about it for a moment, then replied:

“I should be nineteen... Actually, I don’t know how old I am. I have no parents, or memories from when I was a child. But from how big my body was when I had memories, I’d guess that I’m about nineteen years old or so? ...Why are you asking about this?”

Ferris nodded with a serious expression, staring at Ryner, then said:

“...This child should be around six years old, right? That means, you’d have to be twelve years old when you had this child... You are indeed an extreme pervert from young...”

“Why are you so certain that this child is my child!”

“Eh? Isn’t that so? If you’re not his father, then who is his father? He has black hair, he has a rare star shaped pattern in his eyes. It’s obvious he’s your child! You can’t escape from this. Perhaps you wish events to progress like what I read

in a novel, the main character and the woman's conversation— *'This isn't my child! I don't agree! He's a brat that you had with some other man'*

'How, how can you say that? He's your child! I only, only love you...'

'Shut up! I said this isn't my child! That's right! If you say that he's my child, then show me proof! Prove it to me!'

'You, you...'

'See! You can't prove it, right? Ne, get out! I'm very busy! I don't have time to fight with you! Bang! Slap!'

'Ah!! Don't hit my child! I, I know, I'm going!!'

--If it's something like this, I wouldn't accept it."

After Ferris finished reciting the lines, Ryner looked at her in bemusement...

"Ah... there are many points that I want to rebut on, but before I rebut you, I already feel very tired... Let me ask you, what does 'Bang! Slap!' mean... What century is this, and you still imitate that uncreative sound effect with a serious face, don't you feel awkward? More importantly... the main character that you mentioned... Can a main character like that have a story? Let me see, what is the content of this story?"

Ferris nodded her head.

"Yes. It's about a boy who suffers with his mother, although their family is poor, but they have always worked hard, halfway through after they seek revenge on the main character, they work even harder to gain success, it's a very touching story about success..."

Ryner couldn't help but interrupt her.

"Then, it's obvious that the son should be the main character!"

"Eh? Is that so? I have always thought that you were the kind of main character that is extremely evil and the enemy of woman..."

"Why do I have to appear in your novel... Ah, I can't stand this! Every time I talk to you, we have no progress! I—say—we don't have any spare time to be talking nonsense! Really, we have already distanced ourselves, but the pursuers

will chase after us from that mountain, and from what happened there, the people who come after us may be Mage Knights, in addition, the brat has been sleeping, he's not waking up, and it's troublesome if I run while carrying him like that... Under this situation, what should we do! I am asking about that. Do you understand me?"

Ferris nodded.

"This child has always been taking lazy naps, purposefully escaping from his work, this point can prove the truth that you are his father..."

"Nonsense!"

Ryner yelled angrily, Ferris didn't take notice.

"There's no time to be telling those kind of lame jokes, Ryner."

"I, I am going to kill you!"

Ryner's patience had reached its end...

But, as usual, the shouting Ryner was ignored...

Ferris disappeared.

Actually she was just moving so quick that it seemed like she had disappeared...

Then, from some reason, from the elegant stables in front of them—

"Who, who is it... ah?!"

"Save me!"

"Aah?!"

Screams sounded, disappeared, started, vanished, at last...

Ferris sat on a carriage that was as elegantly decorated as the stables, and came out from the stables...

"Ryner. Coincidentally, I picked up a carriage from the side of the road, are you coming?"

Ryner seeing this...



“...I say... Coincidentally, picking up by the road? What a bunch of nonsense! You must have stolen a carriage?”

Ryner said with half-lidded eyes, Ferris answered:

“That means, you don’t want to seat on it? Alright, you continue to carry the child, continue to run and be chased after by the Mage Knights. I’ll take this carriage to Rajit Village, ask the girl for money for our saving of this child, then hurry to the dango shop in the capital. I can’t take care of you, farewell.”

Saying that, she seemed to want to snap the reins, Ryner seeing that quickly shouted.

“Ah, ah, I was just saying nonsense, don’t take it to heart. Anyway it’s already been done, please let me board the carriage.”

Ferris nodded.

“Yes, then, let that child come onto the carriage quickly! I’m worried that the child will be infected by your pervert nature just by sitting on your back, that would be troubling.”

Ryner hearing that, slowly helped the boy on the carriage, saying:

“You’re so rude... Ah, that’s right. Carrying him while escaping, the child’s body wouldn’t be able to keep up with it, so you wanted to grab the carriage. Right? I didn’t think that you were so thorough.”

Ferris nodded, then for some reason, snapped the whip at the horse.

“Ne, it’s now, Silver! Escape this troubling perverted man!!”

In a moment, the horse that was mysteriously names Silver, neighed, then ran...

Ryner seeing that—

“Eh? Ah, wait...”

He moved towards the carriage, but because he had not helped the boy completely on the carriage, so he was unable to get on successfully...

But, the carriage had increased its speed...

Ryner desperately pushed the boy into the carriage. He could only do that.

When Ryner pushed the boy into the carriage, Ferris waved the whip at the horse again.

“Charge, Silver!”

“Who is Silver!!”

When Ryner yelled that, the carriage had started to draw away from him...

“Hey, do you really want me to chase after the carriage!?”

Ryner started to run after it, but the carriage had started to increase its speed...

Ferris said:

“Heh heh. Ne, if you don’t want to be left behind, then run!”

Ryner was so angry that his whole body trembled...

“You... bastard Ferris! I’m really going to kill you...”

But, at this point that carriage was a fair distance ahead, that sentence was unheard by Ferris.

“Ah, damn it! I’m going to beat up that person!”

Ryner said as he ran.

The sky was red.

It was as red as that day.

As if stained with fresh blood...

The blood-red sky.

It was as if he had seen it before...

The crimson evening sky that had been the same colour as the blood flowing out from the mountain of corpses...

That sky...

Ryner didn’t like it.

Every time he saw that kind of sky, he would feel uncomfortable.

Many memories would awaken in his mind.

Many hated memories that he didn't want to remember would stir...

So, Ryner didn't like this kind of sky...

He didn't like the evenings.

But now...

He was desperately running under the red sky that he so despised.

Every time the distance between Ryner widened, the carriage would stop, when Ryner caught up it would start moving as if mocking him, Ryner yelled at the carriage that he was following: "Ahhhhhhhh!! Damn it!! This is maddening! Really! Ferris, wait for me!"

He shouted frantically, but...

For some reason, maybe it was just a trick of the light, he seemed to be smiling...

And you probably should know.

After Ryner was forced to chase after the carriage in this fashion for half a day, the contents of his shouting had changed from— "I really want to kill you"

To screams—

"...Please, I'm begging you, Ferris-sama! Please let the pitiful me on the carriage!"

His screams echoed in the wilderness of the Runa Empire...

And you probably should know.

At this point—

A woman appeared in the Gastark Empire at the northern Menoris Continent.

She had tidy shoulder-length red hair, and a pair of charismatic eyes that showed her strong will and seemed to suck people in.

She looked at the land of Gastark spread out in front of her with her red eyes...

At this moment...

“Do you want to enter the Gastark Empire too?”

The boundary official asked, so she said:

“I heard Gastark is inviting talented people... If I can contribute a little power...”

“Then, can you give me your name?”

She nodded.

Then...

“I’m called Kiefer Knolles.”

She reported her name.

Translator's Notes and References

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